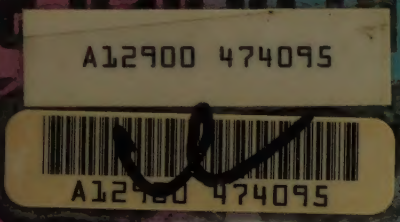
A12900 474095



the bag of the dribble & other

true ghosts from the files of Elliott O'Donnell

Bernhardt J. Hurwood

$4.95

THE HAG OF THE DRIBBLE

And Other True Ghosts

From the Files of
Elliott O'Donnell
Edited by
Bernhardt J. Hurwood

THE HAG OF THE DRIBBLE is a new anthology of the works of a man who was one of the most indefatigable ghost-hunters of modern times. But as he was a collector as well as a pursuer of supernatural phenomena, his writings contain material of a much wider range than those of most others in his field. Not only was he interested in ghosts, but in every conceivable supernatural manifestation detectable by the living human senses. The editor, himself a well-known writer in the field, has assembled a collection of Elliott O'Donnell's vast and varied investigations in his own words.

There are tales of dangerous ghosts with horribly malefic overtones, ghosts and other Things that haunt watery places, of ghosts and elemental spirits haunting trees and woods, amorous ghosts, noisy ghosts, werewolves, witches, and indeed, The Hag of the Dribble—the Welsh equivalent of the Banshee.

The characteristic that separates O'Donnell from so many other storytellers is that, as an antiquarian and genealogist, he always tried to get to the bottom of things in order to provide background material that, whenever available, gave added dimension to his writings.

Jacket designed by Rus Anderson

A12900 474095

ILLINOIS CENTRAL COLLEGE
GR525.036 1971
STACKS
The Hag of the Dribble and other tr
A12900 474095

GR
525
.O 36
1971

O'DONNELL
The Hag of the
Dribble and other
true ghosts

WITHDRAWN

Illinois Central College
Learning Resource Center

The Hag of the Dribble

AND OTHER TRUE GHOSTS

The Hag of the Dribble

AND OTHER TRUE GHOSTS

From the Files of Elliott O'Donnell

BERNHARDT J. HURWOOD

ILLINOIS CENTRAL COLLEGE
LEARNING RESOURCES CENTER

Taplinger Publishing Company
New York

43492

GR
525
.O36
1971

Published in the United States in 1971 by
TAPLINGER PUBLISHING CO., INC.
New York, New York

New Introduction Copyright © 1971 by Bernhardt J. Hurwood

Grateful acknowledgment is made to the following for permission to include copyright material:

To the Hutchinson Publishing Group Ltd., London, for selections taken from: DANGEROUS GHOSTS, *Copyright © 1955 Rider & Company, London;* GHOSTS HELPFUL & HARMFUL, *Copyright 1924 Rider & Son Ltd., London;* HAUNTED WATERS, *Copyright © 1957 Rider & Company, London;* TREES OF GHOSTLY DREAD, *Copyright © 1958 Rider & Company, London;* PHANTOMS OF THE NIGHT, *Copyright © 1956 Rider & Company, London;* FAMILY GHOSTS AND GHOSTLY PHENOMENA, *Copyright 1933 Godfrey O'Donnell.*

To Methuen & Co., Ltd., London, for selections from: WEREWOLVES, *Copyright 1912 Methuen & Co., Ltd., reprinted by permission.*

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced in any form without the written permission of the publisher, except by a reviewer who may wish to quote brief passages in connection with a review for a newspaper or magazine. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN 0-8008-3810-6
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 71-107014
Published simultaneously in the Dominion of Canada by Burns & MacEachern Ltd., Ontario
Printed in the United States of America

Contents

Introduction vii

Part I - Malignant Haunts

Isle of Man Horrors 3
The Monster of the Morar Mound 6
The Clock That Struck Thirteen 11
A Strangling Ghost in Bruges 14
Some of My Own Experiences 16
Crippen's Ghost 18
The Grey House of Horror 23

Part II - Watery Haunts

Monks of Death 35
The Valley of the River of Death 39
Stag-Headed Men of Hate 46
The Horror of the Pool 51
The Woman in Red 55

Part III - Haunted Trees and Forests

The Haunted Christmas Tree 65
Possibly Metamorphosis 69
The Haunted Shrubbery 72
The Ghosts of Whittlebury Forest 78
The Screaming Phantom of Mannheim Forest 81
Cromarty Ghosts 84
The Haunted Copse 86
The Phantom Forest 88
The Haunted Tree in Hyde Park 91

Part IV - Ghosts and Other Things

The Amorous Ghost of Hove 101
The Room of the Lingering Thoughts 105
The Ghost of the Old Boar's Head Tavern and Other Hauntings 109
The Gwrach-Y-Rhibyn (The Hag of the Dribble) 113
Green Ladies, White Ladies, and Other Ghosts 120
Scandinavian, Polish, Russian, and Italian Ghosts 128

Part V - Werewolves

A Werewolf in Innsbruck 139
The Case of Henri Sangfeu 147
The Case of Roland Bertin 152
The Case of Herr Hellen and the Werewolves of the Harz Mountains 156

Introduction

COLLECTIONS of stories of the supernatural are not uncommon in themselves. But when they all come from the pen of a single author, then there are indications that there is something special about them or about the author. That special something can be said both about the present collection and about the man who wrote it. As for the tales, they are all said to be rooted in fact, however dim and remote it may be. And as for the author—well, it would be difficult indeed to find a man today with such superb qualifications.

In the first place, Elliott O'Donnell was able to claim, with full justification, direct descent from the legendary Irish warrior king, Niall Nóigiallach (Niall of the Nine Hostages), who reigned from A.D. 379 to 405. Apparently in addition to being a fighter Niall was also himself associated with the supernatural, an association that was transmitted to his descendants. Entertaining no illusions about his illustrious ancestor, O'Donnell wrote, "He possessed few, if any, of the almost saintlike attributes of Arthur, Britain's legendary king; he was simply a predatory chieftain; but like Arthur he is constantly associated with the magic and mysterious, with fairies, hauntings, and necromancers, and both he and Arthur undoubtedly were psychics."

O'Donnell's first personal experience with a ghost was at the early age of five. The thing he saw was the sort of apparition that could hardly fail to make an impression—regardless of age. It was on a bright summer's eve, and the young boy had been put to bed before sundown. Naturally, like all active youngsters, he was in no mood to go to sleep, especially as the sunlight kept

streaming into his room through cracks between the blinds and the windows.

As he lay in bed trying to overcome his boredom, he suddenly became aware of a click coming from the doorknob. Wondering who could possibly be out there he watched it with great interest. Slowly it turned, and just as slowly the door opened and in walked one of the most extraordinary figures O'Donnell ever was to see in his life. Standing about six feet in height, it was more or less human in shape, but naked and covered with large yellow spots. The head was disproportionately large, and the eyes were greenish-yellow and feline. For a moment or two it stood there, contemplating him with no hint as to its intentions, then slowly it turned away and softly departed in exactly the way it had entered. The reason he was convinced in later life that the experience had not been the dream of an overly imaginative child, was that others reported having seen the same figure in the same house.

Although ghost hunting eventually was to be Elliott O'Donnell's principal interest, he nonetheless managed to pursue a multitude of other activities as well. At the age of twenty, after failing to pass a physical examination for the Royal Irish Constabulary, he decided to try his hand at ranching in the wild American West. Although it was now 1892, and the frontier had been fairly well tamed, it was nonetheless an exciting prospect to the young Irishman thirsting for travel and adventure. Besides, he had other reasons for coming to America. In the eighteenth century, his great-grandfather, John O'Donnell, ran away from home in County Clare, Ireland, made a fortune in India, and eventually settled down on a 2,000-acre estate outside of Baltimore called Canton, where it was said he lived like an Oriental potentate.

While in the United States, Elliott O'Donnell traveled from coast to coast. In addition to working on ranches, he found employment as a cook, a free-lance journalist, and once almost found himself talked into joining the United States Army.

Wherever he went in America, whether in cities like New York, Chicago, San Francisco, or Sacramento, or out in the wilderness, where he once got hopelessly lost (in the Cascade Mountains, to be precise), he invariably managed to get involved with the supernatural. Whatever the circumstances, he kept voluminous notes.

Eventually he returned to the British Isles, staying for a while in London, where he very sensibly learned shorthand to facilitate his prodigious notetaking. Next he tried his hand at teaching, but finding it not to his taste decided that he would become an actor. He enrolled at the Henry Neville dramatic academy, which at the time was London's leading school for performers. Then, after studying for a year he went on tour with a company "run by very unpleasant people." Regarding the producer as an "out-and-out cad" and the stage manager as an ex-shopkeeper who should have remained one, O'Donnell soon became disillusioned with the theater and gave it up in favor of writing. Fortunately he had put his spare time to good use while touring. When he wasn't chasing ghosts, he wrote novels, all of which were eventually published. His theatrical experiences were not entirely unhappy, however, for he made many friends, and over the years, while pursuing his psychic investigations, he was often joined by well-known fellow enthusiasts like C. Aubrey Smith.

"He was very brave in his investigations," recalls Dr. Godfrey O'Donnell, of Worcester. "He would stay in lonely empty houses reportedly haunted, to see if there were any truth in the story. On such occasions he had only a candle for light which he would quench when a manifestation was at hand. On one such occasion, he raised a remarkable concrete phenomenon in the shape of a village policeman who, seeing a shadowy light, thought it might be an unauthorized intruder, and did a bit of investigating himself. I think that this time both of these iron men were a trifle shaken."

Writing further about his fascinating kinsman, Dr. O'Donnell said, "He was also a noted genealogist and historian. He carried out a great deal of research into the descent of notable Irish families, and in particular, that of members of his own clan. He wrote a history of the Irish abroad, and not unnaturally, a great deal of this related to the O'Donnells of Tirconail. He himself was not only descended collaterally from Red Hugh O'Donnell but also from Patrick Sarsfield, the famous patriot and cavalry leader. His considerable panache and distinguished bearing derived therefore from a notable background."

And now to the tales themselves, only a fraction, perhaps, of O'Donnell's immense output, but certainly some of the best, skimmed from the top of the pitcher as it were, and representing the cream of the art of a consummate storyteller.

Bernhardt J. Hurwood
New York, N.Y.
February 1971

PART I

Malignant Haunts

Isle of Man Horrors

In no part of the British Isles are legends and traditional stories of hauntings more numerous than in the Isle of Man. Many of them are associated with Peele Castle; one of the ghosts that is said to haunt it is the notorious Manthe Doog, or phantom, in the form of a shaggy dog with evil, glaring eyes.

Waldron, the famous Manxland historian, says that an apparition called the Manthe Doog haunted all parts of Peele Castle, but particularly the guardroom, to which it would constantly come and lie down by the fire. The soldiers on duty there were so accustomed to seeing it that they ceased to be greatly alarmed by it, but as they believed it to be an evil spirit, waiting for an opportunity to injure them, they refrained from swearing and using foul language in its presence. None of them liked to be left alone with it, or to go alone during the night along the passage through the church to deliver the keys of the castle to the governor or his substitute.

One night a soldier, who had been drinking somewhat heavily, declared that he was not in the least degree afraid of any ghost and would go alone with the keys. Soon after he had started, his comrades in the guardroom heard the most unearthly sounds, and presently he returned, ghastly white and too overcome with terror to say what had happened. He died in violent agony. After this, no one would venture in the passage at night, and consequently it was sealed.

Waldron asserts that he heard the truth of the story vouched for by several people. One of them was an old soldier, who said that he had seen the phantom dog many times. Although the

passage was sealed, rumor asserts that the Manthe Doog still haunts the ancient ruin.

Many stories and legends of ghostly and mysterious happenings are also associated with Rushen Castle, formerly the palace of the kings of Manxland, and for many years the prison of the island.[1] According to Waldron there were said to be magnificent houses under Rushen Castle. Several men, he states, ventured to explore the subterranean region in ages past but none of them ever returned to give an account of what they saw. In more recent times a man possessed of more than ordinary courage and resolution begged permission to explore under the castle. He obtained leave of the governor, went down and returned by the aid of the packthread which he had providentially taken with him.

He told an astounding story. He said that after he had passed through the vaults directly underneath the castle he found himself in a long, dank, and dark passage. When he had gone along it for about a mile he came to a magnificent house which was illuminated with many candles. Having fortified himself with the brandy he had brought with him, he summoned up the courage to knock at the front door of the building.

The door was immediately opened by a servant in gorgeous livery, who asked him what he wanted. He explained that he was anxious to reach the extremity of the subterranean domain but there were so many passages ahead of him that he did not know which was the right one to take. The servant very obligingly showed him the way.

When he had gone a considerable distance he came to a house even more magnificent than the first one. All the windows were wide open, and there were lamps burning in every room. He peered into one of the rooms and saw a hideous monster of at least fourteen feet in height and twelve feet around the body lying on a table in the middle of the floor. Its head was on a

[1] Until 1890.

cushion, and it was holding a sword in one of its huge, hairy, clenched hands.

The sight so appalled the explorer that he turned tail and made no attempt to proceed any farther. On his way back he stopped at the first house he had seen, and the polite servant told him that if he had entered the second house he would have been killed. He asked the servant the name of the monster and who owned the house. The servant would not tell him, and advised him to return to the castle as quickly as possible and never to attempt to explore the subterranean regions again. He took the servant's advice and hastened home.

The monster which he had seen was believed to be one of the semihuman giants expelled from Wales by the great prophet and enchanter Merlin. Incredible as Waldron's story may seem, it was credited in Manxland for many years.

The Monster of the Morar Mound

J. G. Campbell gives the following account of a murderous semihuman, semispirit phenomenon in his book *Witchcraft and Second Sight in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*:[1]

On the shore and forming part of the boundary between north and south Morar, on the west coast of Inverness, is a large, rocky mound, which for many years was very badly haunted. The few people who ventured near it alone after nightfall were invariably found dead and shockingly mangled in the morning.

Living in south Morar not far from the haunted mound was a man named Macdonail, whose son and heir was a strong, courageous youth of eighteen years of age.

One evening Macdonail was visited unexpectedly by a man of considerable importance in the southwest of Scotland.

It so happened that just then there was no one in the neighborhood of south Morar who could help Macdonail entertain so distinguished a guest, so he told his son to go to Bracara and invite certain of his friends there to stay with him for a day or two. He strictly enjoined his son not to return alone that night for fear of the ghost.

The young man set out on his mission at once. He passed the haunted mound, which was on the road to Bracara, without molestation and arrived safely at his destination. The people whom he was instructed to invite were unfortunately unable to return with him, and as he could find no one else willing to

[1] Belief in phenomena of this kind existed in some parts of Scotland until comparatively recently.

accompany him, he was obliged to start on his homeward journey alone.

Early in the morning his dead body was found close to the haunted mound, horribly mutilated. Around it were traces of a desperate struggle. When Macdonail learned about his son's death he swore that he would avenge him.

Regardless of the warnings of his friends and relatives, he went alone one night to the haunted mound. He had not been there long before he saw a tall, naked, hairy, headless figure, which came out from behind a rock and said, "You have come to take your son's ransom. Be wise and go home." [2]

Macdonail in response seized the apparition, and a furious struggle ensued. After it had gone on for a few minutes Macdonail managed to draw his dirk, and he was about to use it when his opponent cried, "Hold your hand, MacCuil,[3] touch me not with iron, and while there is one within the twentieth degree related to you, I will not be seen again."

Macdonail stayed his hand and found he was grasping air; his sanguinary opponent had suddenly and inexplicably vanished. His account of his extraordinary combat was widely credited not only in the neighborhood of its alleged occurrence but throughout Ayr.

Mr. Campbell says that shortly before he wrote his book belief in the haunting even yet prevailed, and that people attributed its nonrecurrence to the fact that some of Macdonail's relatives were still living.

Another wild traditional story, in which there is a jumble of the physical with the ghostly, is associated with the house and grounds of Balconie in Cromarty.[4]

[2] It is difficult to understand how a man without a head could speak; possibly the head was there but Macdonail, for some peculiar reason, was unable to see it. Apparently his psychic vision had limitations.

[3] The name by which he was also known.

[4] *Scenes and Legends of the North of Scotland,* by Hugh Miller, and *Picturesque Scotland,* by F. Watt, M.A., and Rev. A. Carter, M.A.

In close proximity to the grounds of Balconie House there is a deep and narrow gorge, through which the River Auldgrande pursues a winding, rocky course. Owing to its savage, gloomy character and rumors of strange, unaccountable happenings on the banks of the river and the bridge over it, the gorge has long borne a sinister reputation.

Writing about the gorge in his statistical account of the parish of Balconie, Dr. Robertson says:

> The observer, if he can look on the gulf below without any uneasy sensation, will be gratified by a view equally awful and astonishing. The wildness of the steep and rugged rocks; the gloomy horror of the cliffs and caverns, inaccessible to mortal tread, and where the genial rays of the sun never yet penetrated; the waterfalls, which are heard pouring down in different places of the precipice, with sounds various in proportion to their distances; the hoarse and hollow murmuring of the river, which runs at the depth of one hundred and thirty feet below the surface of the earth; the fine groves of pines, which majestically climb the sides of the beautiful eminence that rises immediately from the brink of the chasm; all these objects cannot be contemplated without exciting emotions of wonder and admiration in the mind of every beholder.

The traditional story is as follows: About the middle of the seventeenth century the laird of Balconie returned home from a rather long absence with a beautiful young wife. She was singularly reserved and never alluded to her family or her premarriage days. She shunned society and used to ramble in places where there was little likelihood of her encountering anyone. The gorge of the Auldgrande seemed to have a great attraction for her; it was in its immediate vicinity that she spent hours every day.

A sudden change came over her. She grew less reserved and much more sociable, no longer shunning all her husband's acquaintances; but there was a mysterious wildness about her which inspired everyone who came in contact with her with a

feeling of fear and apprehension. She seemed to be a creature of another world, not wholly human.

One evening she set out to the gorge accompanied by one of her maids, a pretty, simple highland girl to whom she had become curiously attached. It was dusk when they reached the gorge. The only sound that they could hear was the murmuring of the distant river.

"Let us approach nearer the edge," said the lady, speaking for the first time since she had left the house.

"No, no, not any nearer, madam," the girl cried. "The gully is haunted. Strange lights and shapes have been seen in it after nightfall."

"Pshaw!" the lady exclaimed. "How can you believe such stories? Come with me. I will show you a path which leads right down to the river." She seized the girl and dragged her, despite her struggles, toward the edge of the chasm. "You must come with me," she screamed; "there is no escape for you."

"Suffer me, lady, to accompany you," a strong, masculine voice said. "Your surety, madam, must be a willing one."

A dark man in green suddenly appeared by the side of the lady, who immediately removed her hands from the girl and, with an expression of passive despair, allowed the stranger to lead her to the brink of the gorge. She turned round on reaching the precipice and, taking a bunch of household keys from her belt, threw them to the maid. The keys struck a granite boulder and left on it an impression which is there to this day.

The girl stood rooted to the ground with terror and amazement. When she cast a timid look around her to see what had become of the lady and the man in green, there was no sign of them.

On returning to Balconie House she told her strange story. A search for the lady was commenced at once, but although it was prolonged for several days, it proved to be fruitless. Not a trace of the lady and the man in green could be found anywhere.

Ten years after her mysterious disappearance, a middle-aged highlander named Donald, while searching in the gorge for a basket of fish he had lost, came to an immense cavern. Two huge dogs rose from their beds when they saw him, yawned lazily, and to his relief lay down without attempting to attack him. Behind them was an iron table, and on it the basket of fish which he had lost. Seated on an iron chair by the table was the lady of Balconie, who had so mysteriously disappeared. Donald begged her to return to her home. She told him that she was fixed to the chair and that no one could ever free her. Donald looked at the chair and saw that it was fastened to the rocky wall of the cavern, and that the lady was chained securely to it.

She besought him to leave at once and threw food to the dogs, which were eying him menacingly, in order to keep them quiet while he made his escape. He took his basket, bade her good-bye and left the cave unharmed. He emerged from the gorge after a long and dangerous scramble among the rocks, rendered slippery in places by the spray from the river, and arrived home safely.

Although many attempts were made by people living in the neighborhood of the gorge to find the cave and liberate the lady of Balconie, they all failed. She was never seen by mortal eyes again. Presumably, through having broken some kind of compact which she had made with the devil, either he or one of his friends in the guise of the dark man in green had seized her.

What a terrible fate to be glued forever to a rusty iron chair in a cold, damp cave! It only shows how very unwise it is to have any kind of dealings with the devil. He is sure to get the better of one in the end.

Absurdly fantastic as is this traditional story of the lady of Balconie, it is hardly more so than many of the stories of witches and sorcerers, in which there was once a widespread belief not only in Scotland but in all parts of the world.

The Clock That Struck Thirteen

I WILL now narrate another case, in which the ghost, without apparently coming into actual contact with its victim, or victims, seemingly brings about the misfortune it predicts, and is thus in a sense harmful to a degree.

In 1909 I made the acquaintance of a widow, who lived in Gloucester Place and was greatly interested in ghosts. She told me that her house was badly haunted and that she had once had a very extraordinary experience in it.

It was this: Soon after she had gone to bed one night she heard, to her astonishment, a clock, apparently on the landing outside her room, suddenly begin to strike. Knowing there was no clock there, and feeling no little mystified in consequence, she listened to the sounds curiously, and counted thirteen. There was then a short interval, after which the mysterious clock struck, we will say, seven (I have forgotten the exact number), and then after another slight interval, three. A most emphatic silence followed. My friend lay for some seconds quite still and then, finding that her husband was awake, she asked him if he had heard anything.

"Yes," was his reply, "I heard what sounded like a clock striking. God alone knows the meaning of it."

In the morning they both made a note of the occurrence in their diaries. Well, exactly seven days later, at three o'clock in the afternoon, my friend's husband met with an accident while skating, which eventually resulted in his death. After telling me of this experience, my friend went on to say that she had since

then often heard sounds of a most alarming and inexplicable character in the house and that she did not know what to do about it. She finally asked me if I could suggest anything, and I replied at once, "I think you would be well advised to leave the place as soon as you can; for, in my opinion, there is some malign presence in the house that very much resents your being there."

"I feel that, too," she said. "I have felt it all along, but I will take your advice and move without delay."

However, after I had gone, she must have changed her mind, for when some months later I found myself quite by chance sitting next to her at an evening performance of *The Blue Bird,* she was still in the same house.

"I must tell you," she whispered the moment after we had exchanged greetings, "I heard that clock again last night. First of all it struck thirteen, just as before, and then, after a short interval, three. An uncle of mine is ill and I have an idea it predicts his death."

"Maybe," I replied, but I did not think as she did. A strange feeling came over me, and I felt that it was not her uncle's but her own death which the clock prognosticated. On my return home, I confided my fears to my wife; and a few days later, with more horror than surprise, we read an account of my friend's death, in *The Daily Mail.* She had been killed in a taxi collision in Portman Square. A lady friend with a pet dog on her lap sat beside her in the taxi, but neither she nor the dog was even slightly injured, and the driver, too, if I remember rightly, escaped without a bruise. Now, as this collision, with its fatal result, took place three days after my friend had heard the phantom clock strike thirteen and then three, it seems quite clear that the clock foretold her death, and foretold it in precisely the same manner as it had foretold the death of her husband. But the question is, were these phenomena merely warnings, and nothing more, or was there, hidden in that house, some malevo-

lent ghostly entity, maybe the spirit of some former occupant, or, maybe, again, an elemental, that, resenting the presence there of these two humans, had actually connived at their death? I instinctively incline to the latter theory.

A Strangling Ghost in Bruges

AS IN A former case, interest in the one I am about to relate centers on a haunted bed. There is in a hotel, situated in one of the oldest parts of Bruges, a bed that is reported to be haunted in a very terrible fashion. It is a double bed, and everyone who sleeps on the left side of it experiences a sensation of being throttled. According to my informant, two men, traveling for a West End London firm, decided to put up for a night at the said hotel, and the room containing the haunted bed was allotted to them. They knew nothing about the alleged hauntings and, getting into bed, cheerfully prepared for a long night's rest. At about one o'clock, the man sleeping on the right side was awakened by a dreadful gurgling sound, apparently proceeding from his companion and, on sitting up at once in alarm, his attention was attracted to a large mirror directly opposite him. The moonlight was strongly focused on it, and he saw in it, to his unmitigated horror, a most lurid reflection. It was that of the bed, and bending over the left side of it was a tall, shadowy figure, garbed like a monk. The figure, whose face he could not see, owing to the big black hood it wore, was clutching his friend by the throat, apparently endeavoring to strangle him. For a few seconds he was too overcome with terror and astonishment to do anything, but eventually, pulling himself together, he jumped out of bed and switched on the electric light. The instant this was done, the monkish figure vanished. Not a moment too soon, however, for the man in the bed was seemingly at his last gasp, and it took him some time before he could recover sufficiently to speak. He then stated that, being awakened from his sleep

by feeling the bedclothes pulled violently, he had opened his eyes and seen a dreadful form bending over him. The next moment cold bony fingers seized him by the throat, and he underwent all the tortures of slow strangulation.

That was his experience, and it resembles very closely what I myself have undergone on two occasions.

Some of My Own Experiences

THE FIRST of these was in Dublin. I was studying at the time for the Royal Irish Constabulary and living in rooms in a house close to the Waterloo Road.

One night, being exceptionally tired, I retired to rest rather earlier than usual and was sitting on the edge of the bed, preparatory to getting in, when I saw a tall figure emerge from one of the four corners of the room, and advance stealthily toward me. I had blown out the candle, but the night being fine, although the moon was temporarily obscured by clouds, the room was not wholly dark. This being so, I was enabled to follow the figure's movements, though I could form no definite idea as to its actual appearance. It was too indistinct and shadowy. Approaching the bed very swiftly and noiselessly, it extended two long arms and seized me by the throat. I tried to struggle and call out. I could do neither one nor the other. I was both limb- and tongue-tied; I was, in fact, helpless. In this condition I suffered myself to be pushed backward, down on to the counterpane, and I then underwent sensations which I believe to have been exactly similar to those of strangulation. Finally, I lost consciousness. What brought me back to life I don't know, but when I did eventually recover consciousness and was able to summon up the courage to open my eyes, I could detect no sign of my assailant. Raising myself up I at once lighted the candle, and after searching the room and assuring myself that no one was in hiding, I got into bed, and kept a light burning till the morning.

After breakfast I narrated my experience to my landlady, and asked her if there was anything wrong with the room. At first

she replied in the negative, utterly pooh-poohing the idea of ghosts but, on my pressing the question and declaring I would make inquiries in the neighborhood, she at last admitted that the room was haunted, and reluctantly confessed I was not the first person who had had an unpleasant experience in it. She moved me into another room at once, and during the remainder of my stay in the house I never encountered the figure again.

About a year later, however, I had a precisely similar experience in a well-known haunted house close to Bristol. I have never, I am thankful to say, encountered a strangling ghost since then.

Crippen's Ghost

WHETHER the ghost in the following story, told me some years ago, was the ghost of Crippen or not, it certainly seems to have possessed the necessary title for inclusion here, since, although neither harmful in a physical nor in a moral sense, it apparently brought serious misfortune to the man who encountered it. In narrating his experience my informant, who, besides being a student of occultism, was something of a metaphysician, and a budding author to boot, could not resist indulging in an unnecessary amount of rhetoric; but, all the same, I shall reproduce his story *in toto,* and in his own words, leaving my readers to subtract the gist of it, which he assured me was absolutely true.

"When Hawley Crippen, doctor and murderer, healer and destroyer, paid the last penalty of the law, the man in the street murmured, 'Well, he's gone! The world's well rid of him.' But is the world rid of him? Aye, that's where the rub comes in! To the executioner and other officials who stood around the grim scaffolding, and to the public in general, it was enough that that five feet odd of human anatomy should have ceased to breathe. It was enough for them that the curiously large hands that had stirred the poison cup would stir nothing else, the scheming brain that had bungled murder would bungle nothing else; that the criminal was dead, and the criminal spirit, or force, or whatever else you choose to call it, had gone. Where, and in what manner, was no matter to anyone, and as far as they were concerned, all interest in Crippen dropped with his final drop into space.

"But with me it was different. I felt all along that by far the

most interesting developments in the Crippen case had yet to come, and that the tautening of the rope was but a preliminary. I am a believer in the occult and in the survival of the ego after death. I have proved, at least to my own satisfaction, that the superphysical (there is no such thing as supernatural) body of man remains tied to this earth for an indefinite period—in fact forever, unless its capacity for spiritual development be kept alive, in which case it may, eventually, be released and removed to more elevated spheres. We, who are on earth, may assist in this removal either by prayers or by seeking the earthbound phantasm in haunted places, and endeavoring by oral communication to assist it in tearing itself away from its animal passions and desires. There is no limit to the good that can be done in this way; hence, ghostly investigations may and should become a noble work, and one in which we should all try to help. Prayers for the dead are, in my opinion, of a far greater importance than any other in our liturgy, and in making this statement I merely wish to point out that when I investigate a haunted house, I am not prompted to do so solely by curiosity; I go there hoping that I may be of service to the earthbound spirit, and provided, of course, that the phenomenon be a phantasm of the rational dead, there is every reason to suppose that I may be. In the case of elementals and the phantasms of lunatics one has no chance, and any attempt to converse or reason with them would not only be futile but dangerous, for the superphysical can, undoubtedly, do actual bodily harm.

"To revert to Crippen. I disagree entirely with those who describe him as a 'commonplace and vulgar type of murderer.' To me it is obvious that the supernormal was manifest in Crippen in a remarkable degree. Who would have suspected, for instance, that his small, ill-made, and apparently weak frame possessed such an amount of vitality and agility; that he was almost as nimble as a monkey; that he could, in fact, outshine any sailor in climbing a wall or swarming a rope? Or, who, in looking at his ugly face, with its big, fishy, protruding eyes, eyes of

an elementalish blue, could possibly have guessed the owner to be possessed of such a beautifully shaped head? Crippen might well have been fashioned and molded by half a dozen different gods, and the more I studied the man, the more I wondered what his phantasm would be like. Would it minutely resemble his physical body, or would it be purely animal—as animal and savage as his mind?

"Wishing to settle this question and desirous also of doing some good to the unhappy man's spirit, should it prove to be earthbound, I visited a certain neighborhood and, making inquiries, at length learned of a place which Crippen was said to be fond of visiting at night. He was hanged, you will remember, at six o'clock in the morning. Well, shortly before midnight, that same day, I arrived at this said spot to commence my vigil. It was a dark, open space partly enclosed by somber, grey brick walls, and not a hundred yards from a silently suggestive piece of water. Wrapping myself up in a thick overcoat I leaned against a wall and watched the shadows. For me, shadows have a peculiar significance; they indicate the presence of occult forces. I can sometimes see in them signs quite unsuspected by the generality of people; and when I detect these signs, I know, as surely as I know anything, that the superphysical, the unknown I long to meet, yet dread to face, is close at hand. I knew that it was not far off now. There were shadows near me, which, bearing no likeness whatever to any earthly object, defied explanation. They had certain shapes which seemed to me to be interpretative of abstract quality rather than of concrete matter; shapes that suggested the workings of some esoteric, subtle mind rather than the form of any separate, individual things; and yet every shadow that I saw had an unmistakable individuality, an individuality that marked it out as quite distinct from the rest. Were these enigmatical, cabalistic shadows a superphysical, cerebral reservoir for all sorts and conditions of phantasms, and was it on account of this property that they were a magnet for earthbounds? Was it from the reflections of a titanic, occult

brain that the peripatetic spirits drew their inspirations? Or must I reverse the order of my deductions and consider the exotic shadows reflections of innumerable psychic minds? But here my psychic thoughts were interrupted by purely physical sensations of cold and, pulling my overcoat more tightly around me, I chided myself for being so foolish as to leave my warm fireside and, by coming to that spot, incurring the risk of rheumatism and double pneumonia. The minutes glided swiftly by. The clock of a neighboring church struck one; and I began to wonder whether Dr. Crippen's phantasm was earthbound after all; or whether it was tied to some other place that he favored more, perhaps, when alive. The silence now was intense. With the exception of an occasional toot from a taxi and the shrill whistle of a goods train on the adjacent local line, no other sounds were to be heard.

"For a long time the street was deserted, and then a bedraggled figure in a shawl, with a big paper parcel under her arm, shuffled noiselessly by, and disappeared in the direction of the hushed water. Another long interval ensued, interrupted by the same pretentious clock sonorously striking two. If Crippen's phantasm were earthbound, and attached to that spot, it would surely come now, I argued to myself, for two is the hour most often chosen by the occult for its manifestation, whether visual or auditory.

"A feeling of drowsiness crept over me, my eyelids drooped, and I began to lose cognizance of my surroundings, when I was recalled sharply to myself by an intensely cold current of air. Intuitively I recognized the superphysical—it was the same species of cold which invariably heralds its approach. I was right in my surmises after all; the place was destined to be haunted. My eyes were wide enough open now, and every nerve in my body tingled with the keenest expectation.

"Something was coming! And if that something was not the apparition of the executed criminal, whose apparition could it be? There was a slight sound of scratching from somewhere

close beside me. It might have been the wind hustling the dead leaves against the masonry, or . . . I looked round and saw nothing. The sound was repeated, and with the same result—nothing. A third time I heard it, and then, from the dark road on one side of me, there came the somewhat vague and indistinct (vague and indistinct, perhaps, owing to the uncertain light) form of a dog—a gaunt, hungry-looking, mangy mongrel. For a few seconds it stopped short and looked at me with big, swollen eyes, which glittered with a something that was not actually bestial or savage, something strange, and yet not altogether strange, something enigmatic and yet not entirely enigmatic.

"With noiseless, slinking gait, it soon moved on, and I watched it disappear in the direction of the river. Then, feeling that it was useless to remain any longer, and wondering, wondering, wondering, I sought some hotel where I could rest and, perchance, sleep till morning.

"Thus ended my adventure that night. It was followed immediately by a serious misfortune. At first, nothing daunted, I went again to the same place, and yet again, and on both occasions, as the clock struck two, I encountered the same apparition. However, as after both these encounters, respectively, I experienced a fresh reverse of fortune, I resolved to overcome the extraordinary fascination the baleful phantasm had for me, and consequently never went near the spot again."

The Grey House of Horror

THE FOLLOWING STORY of a gruesome haunting in France was told me by one of my readers. It was narrated to her by M. Divorne, a retired French merchant, who vouched for the truth of it.

There was something ominous in the appearance of Grey House. Standing in spacious grounds near a major road, it was, like its name, grey, but grey with the greyness of death. People who lived in its neighborhood complained that they always experienced a chilly sensation when they passed by. Children were much too scared by the look of it and by the stories they had heard about the haunting to linger in close proximity to it, and if a ball, thrown carelessly by one of them, fell into any of the grounds of the house, no one ever dared to venture in quest of it. People never occupied the house for long, and more than one mysterious death was rumored to have taken place within its forbidding walls.

It was the cheapness of the house that tempted M. Divorne to buy it. To acquire a commodious house and large grounds freehold, and within about fifty miles of Paris, for a quarter the price he had paid for the house in which he was living, was wonderful.

It was a thousand pities Mme. Divorne was not altogether satisfied. She complained that Grey House would not be easy to run with only two servants—a cook and a housemaid; there were so many stairs and so few modern conveniences. Moreover, there was something in the atmosphere of the house that she

did not like. She could not very easily describe that something, but it depressed her and imparted a feeling almost of dread.

M. Divorne only laughed and declared that it was just her fancy, that she would get over it when the house has been touched up a bit and made to look a little more cheerful. It merely needed new wallpapers and a few roaring fires to make it cozy.

"I like the house," he told her. "There is plenty of space, and that will be a treat after having been cooped up for so long in a small town villa. The fresh country air will do us all the world of good. There will be no need to buy fruit or vegetables. We shall be able to grow all we want, and if we have more than we need for ourselves we can sell it. Fowls, too! We can have new-laid eggs every day."

He tried very hard to infect Mme. Divorne and his children with his enthusiasm for Grey House. There were six children. Henri, the eldest, was an accountant; Louise, a good-looking brunette, was a typist and stenographer; Pierre, who was just eighteen years of age, was a clerk in a lawyer's office; Marie, the second girl, was a manicurist; Henriette and Maxime were still at school.

They were all quite ignorant of the ill reputation which Grey House bore in the locality, and the agent, through whose medium M. Divorne bought the property, refrained very discreetly from alluding to it.

The family did not move into Grey House until the papering of the walls and painting of doors and windows were finished, and everything was in readiness for the newcomers. M. and Mme. Divorne were the first to arrive; the rest of the family were unable to come till later in the day.

The behavior of the dogs, Raoul and Muffin, struck Mme. Divorne as odd. They evinced great reluctance to enter the grounds and still greater reluctance to enter the house. Usually on going to a place that they had not been to before, they would wander around and do a little investigation, but instead of doing this,

when they entered Grey House they kept close to Mme. Divorne and seemed very much afraid. Their behavior puzzled her, and she wondered if they sensed the something unpleasant in the house and grounds which she sensed. It was not until the dogs had been in the building for some minutes that they appeared to be a little more at ease.

M. Divorne was right when he described Grey House as commodious; it was, in the sense of being roomy, for the hall was spacious, the staircase wide, and most of the rooms were large, with high ceilings and wide chimneys. But even with the new paint and paper there was still a curious gloom about the interior of the building. Mme. Divorne felt it. M. Divorne did not appear to notice it.

Except for the dogs being very restless during the day and whining and growling at night, nothing unusual or in any way alarming occurred until the Divornes had been in the house for several weeks.

It was one night, about the middle of September, that Louise awoke to hear the dogs barking and then sounds as if something were being rolled or pushed across the floor of the landing over her head. Wondering what it could be, she sat up in bed and listened. Presently there was a queer bumping sound, followed by another, and then another, as if some heavy object, like a barrel, were coming down the stairs. She got up, switched on the light and opened the door.

The staircase was at the far end of the landing but the moonlight, pouring through a window above it, enabled her to see it tolerably clearly. The bumping reached the landing on which she stood, continued across it, and went on down the wide staircase into the hall. A few moments later there was a loud crash, as if a quantity of crockery had fallen or been thrown from a height on to a stone floor. After that there was a deep and prolonged silence.

Up to now Louise had been more curious than actually scared. She had seen nothing, but there was something so eerie and

frightening in the silence that she sprang back to her room, locked the door and scrambled into bed. She kept the light on until the dawn had broken.

At breakfast she inquired if anyone had heard anything in the night. Henriette said she had heard queer noises. Henriette's and her account of the alarming sounds were received with skepticism by all the family, with the exception of Mme. Divorne, who appeared to be greatly concerned.

Two days later the cook and the housemaid complained that there was something wrong with the drains. They said that on their way to bed the previous night they had been nearly suffocated by a vile stink. It was on the back staircase, leading from the basement to their quarters in the rear of the house.

M. Divorne was puzzled and skeptical. He told them that he could not understand how the drains could be at fault, since before buying the house he had had them thoroughly tested, and they had been found to be in a very satisfactory condition.

What the servants said, however, was very shortly confirmed by an experience that befell Henri. He was resting his elbows on the window sill of his bedroom early one evening, gazing at the moonlit lawn and the white, glimmering road in the distance, when he fell into a reverie, from which he was abruptly aroused and brought sharply back to earth by the barking and growling of the dogs, and a sensation of great coldness, which turned into one of loathing, when his nostrils were assailed by an overpowering stench. It was so dreadful that he quickly threw open the window and, in order to rid himself of the stink, inhaled deep breaths of the cool night air.

Hearing a strange noise behind him, he turned around and saw a tall object move across the floor and disappear by the door. It was too vague and shadowy for him to discern at all distinctly, but he got the impression of something unpleasantly bizarre, and was so terrified that he fled downstairs to the drawing room, where the rest of the family were gathered.

Into their astonished ears, as soon as he had recovered breath,

he poured a somewhat confused account of what had happened. M. Divorne attributed it to his imagination, but at the same time showed symptoms of uneasiness. The next day something occurred to augment that uneasiness in no small measure.

He was sitting by the dining room fire reading, when a cold current of air made him shiver. Glancing around to see whence it proceeded, he saw the door was wide open. Thinking it odd because he remembered shutting it, but supposing that he had not latched it properly, or that someone had opened it without his hearing him or her, he closed it carefully and resumed his reading. He had, however, only been occupied thus for a few minutes when he again felt a cold blast of air sweep past him and, turning, he perceived that the door was again wide open. He rose and was about to go to the door to close it when he was aware of a foul smell. It seemed to come from the doorway, and although he could see nothing to account for it, he had the distinct feeling that something had entered the room and was standing looking at him. He got the impression of a body in the last stages of putrefaction. Unable to stand the smell, he fled to the French window, tore it open, and made an undignified, precipitate exit into the garden.

He was very badly scared but, not wanting to prejudice the family still more against the house, he kept the incident to himself. It was in the garden that the next happening of a disturbing nature occurred.

Marie and Henriette were strolling about the lawn one fine Sunday afternoon, when the twilight was gradually deepening and a half moon was gleaming faintly in the darkening autumn sky. Feeling someone was behind them, Marie looked hastily around but saw nothing. They went on, and still fancied that someone was following them. The feeling was so acute that they were obliged to keep looking around, and each time the result was the same. No one was visible.

They came to a junction of several paths. Close to it was an old covered-in well, which had not been used for very many years.

They paused to look at it, for it had a strange fascination for them. While they were gazing at it something that they could not see rushed past them. A moment or two afterward they heard a splash, as if something very heavy had fallen into the well. They were so frightened that they ran back to the house, and all the way to it heard footsteps bounding along after them.

That night Marie woke and saw a shadowy funereal pall descend from the ceiling onto the bed in which Henriette was sleeping. It assumed the outlines of a coffin. She sat up in terror. The pall vanished. Her scream roused Henriette, who asked if anything had happened. Marie pretended that she had had a bad dream. Neither of the girls went to sleep again; they lay awake talking until the morning.

A week after this incident the cook and the housemaid gave notice to leave. They said that they could not sleep at night because of the alarming noises, and that they had had more than enough of the abominable smells.

Mme. Divorne could not get any maids to sleep in the house, and had difficulty in obtaining two daily women, who could not be persuaded to stay after it began to get dusk. As a result, Mme. Divorne, assisted by one of the girls, had to get the dinner. M. Divorne still professed to be in love with the house, but there were signs of increasing discontent among the other members of the family.

One day, when the girls and Maxime were in one of the side gardens, there was a curious noise seemingly behind a bush that grew close to a wall. Both dogs growled and their hair bristled.

"Go seek, Raoul," Maxime cried. "Go on, fetch 'em out. See who's there."

Thus urged, Raoul, with obvious reluctance, pushed his way into the bush, disappeared for a few seconds, and then rushed out with his tail drooping, looking very badly scared.

Maxime went behind the bush and searched it well, but could not discover anything to account for the dog's behavior. The next day Raoul would not touch his food or leave his ken-

nel. He stayed there all curled up, and so obviously ill that M. Divorne had a vet to see him. The vet frankly admitted that he did not quite know what was the matter with Raoul. He thought that he may have had a bad fright. He gave him some medicine, but it did not do Raoul any good, and he died a day or two after.

Everyone in the house was upset, for the Divornes were great animal lovers, and they were all very fond of Raoul. Maxime was certain that something in the bush, some hidden horror, was responsible for Raoul's death. A rough-haired fox terrier puppy was bought to keep Muffin company.

For more than a week the Divornes enjoyed a respite from the smells, but much anxiety was caused by the indisposition of Henriette. The local doctor, who was called in, at first attributed it to indigestion, then to gastric trouble, after that to migraine, and finally to a combination of all three. His remedies were of no avail.

Mme. Divorne was sure that it was the atmosphere of the house, which was bad for them all, and begged her husband to sell or let the place. This he would not do.

"Henriette's illness has nothing to do with the house," he said. "She would probably have been ill in Nantes, where we used to live. She's been working too hard. They give her too many lessons at school. She needs a good long holiday and plenty of fresh air. That will do her more good than any physic. We haven't given this house a proper trial yet. Wait another six months, and if anything unpleasant occurs during that time, a repetition of those stinks, for instance, I will do as you suggest and quit; though we shall never find another so suitable a place, suitable in every way. Rooms, space, gardens, situation, everything that we want."

Mme. Divorne sighed. She realized the hopelessness of arguing with him. Never was there such a pig-headed, mulish man. A more potent influence than any argument was, however, impending. M. Divorne was very much a person of habit and routine. He awoke and got up always about the same time every day,

and as regularly had his meals and went for a constitutional. If the weather was fine he spent a certain restricted time in the garden; if wet, he stayed indoors and read—for the improvement of his mind, he told the family. The finding of some of his literature, carefully hidden away, created considerable amusement and some cynicism in the finders.

His bedroom was somewhat isolated. It was the only room in a short passage or corridor leading out of the first landing. He liked it because the dormer window commanded an extensive view of one of the lawns and the country beyond. It had a wide old-fashioned chimney and a large cupboard, deep-set in the wall. There was a gloom even on a bright, sunny day, but that M. Divorne professed not to mind.

Not feeling too well one night during the last week of November, he went to bed a trifle earlier than usual, and the weather being stormy and bitterly cold he had a coal fire in his room. The elements increased in violence as the night advanced. The wind howled and whistled down the chimney and beat the snow and ivy leaves against the window with a fury that threatened to break the glass.

M. Divorne lost no time in undressing and getting into bed. For a long time he lay listening to the wind and the flaking sound of ashes as they fell on the hearth, and watching the grotesque shadows cast on the ceiling by the flickering fire flames. Drowsiness at last stealing over him, he relapsed into a deep, dreamless sleep.

He woke with a wild shriek of the wind ringing in his ears, and was conscious of a vile, nauseating smell. Raising himself up in bed and opening his eyes, he received a terrible shock. Standing at the foot of the bed, its horrible head thrust aggressively forward, was a tall, nude, luminous figure. Its face was that of a corpse in an advanced state of decomposition. The livid, scaly flesh seemed to be falling from the bones; the rotting lips were wreathed in a leer that revealed long, jagged, yellow teeth; only the pale, slanting eyes were alive. They were fixed on M. Di-

vorne with an expression of malicious glee. A gruesome, leadenish blue light enveloped the whole body.

The shock M. Divorne experienced, on beholding such an appalling spectacle, was so great that he fainted, and it was not for some time after he had recovered consciousness that he ventured to open his eyes. The figure had vanished, the fire was out, and the room was in darkness. Daylight seemed an age in coming. Seldom had M. Divorne been so thankful as he was when a rap on the door announced the arrival of his early cup of coffee.

He did not tell the family what he had seen. They guessed from his face that he had had none too good a night, and their suspicions increased when he told them that he had come around to their way of thinking, and considered it wisest after all to vacate the house.

Fortunately for the Divornes the scramble for houses rendered it easy to sell Grey House, and they were lucky enough to find new quarters almost at once. The move into other surroundings put new life into Henriette, whose mysterious malady took a turn for the better directly she left Grey House.

Curious to learn something about the history of Grey House, Pierre made numerous inquiries and learned eventually that on its site there had once been a very ancient mansion. Horrible deeds were alleged to have taken place within its grim and sinister walls, and for that reason not only the building itself but the ground on which it stood was accursed. Misfortune overtook all who occupied it.

The De Morvelles, into whose hands the estate passed in the seventeenth century, met with nothing but trouble and disaster all the time they owned it. They sold it to the Lantiéres. During the Lantiéres' occupation of the house a mysterious fire occurred one night, and only the bare, blackened walls were left standing.

The Godeuils, who bought the estate from the Lantiéres, had the ruin of the old mansion cleared away, and a new house erected on its site. The life of the new house was short. It was leveled to the ground during the French Revolution. Its inmates,

the dead and living, were thrown into a well by the enemies of the aristocrats. A few years after the revolution Grey House was built. At first it was a private residence, and then it became an inn, which acquired a very evil reputation. After the death of the landlord Grey House once again became a private residence. Those who owned it always appeared to be only too glad to get rid of it.

If what Pierre Divorne learned about the history of Grey House and about that of its predecessors was true, one can hardly be surprised that the place was haunted. Accursed places exude baleful influences and act as magnets to all kinds of evil spirits.

PART II

Watery Haunts

Monks of Death

THE following story was told me by Mrs. Grey, a lady who came to one of my talks in London.

Her grandmother, Mrs. Miles, was walking one evening with her friend, Miss Beal, along a country road in Hampshire. It was one of those evenings, far too few in this country, when there is a cloudless blue sky, dry roads, and the air is fragrant with the delicious scent of flowers and newmown hay.

"I never remember such a truly heavenly evening," Miss Beal exclaimed. "I could breathe in this air forever." And throwing back her head and opening her mouth, she drew in deep gulps.

"And how silent it is," Mrs. Miles remarked. "How plainly we can hear the wind in the telegraph poles and trees. Listen!"

They stood still and listened to the plaintive moaning and sighing of the wind as it rustled through the trees and bushes.

Suddenly they saw rising, so it seemed, from a pond on one side of the road a couple of hundred yards ahead of them, a figure habited like a monk. He was a tall man and advanced toward them with long strides. As he drew nearer they saw his face, and were struck simultaneously with the old-worldness of it. It seemed to be a throwback into long centuries past, and was just such a face as they had seen in paintings depicting monks and friars of the Middle Ages.

He came hurriedly on and, passing them by without as much as casting a glance in their direction, was continuing his course onward when, quite suddenly, they lost sight of him. One instant he was moving along the center of the broad white road, and the next instant he had vanished.

They discussed the incident all their way home, and mentioned it to their landlady, who was a very old inhabitant of the locality.

"I often heard tell of the monks when I was a girl," she said. "My father always said he saw one one night when he was going to see my mother—it was in his courting days—but I never set eyes on one myself. It is said they never appear to anyone save as a kind of warning. Maybe you will hear news in the morning."

They did, for Miss Beal received a telegram about noon, saying that a very near and dear relative of hers was dead. She had died just about the hour Miss Beal and Mrs. Miles had seen the phantom monk.

Another story relating to a ghostly monk seen in the same locality was told me by a man in whose house I was lodging when I was on tour. It was after the show was over, and I was chatting with him and a fellow actor before I went to bed.

"I had been marketing with my father," the man said, "and we were late in starting for home. It was a rather long walk but I was very young and strong and did not mind the distance. It was New Year's Eve and mild for the season. The sky was cloudy and there was a slight ground mist.

"My father was not very talkative. I think all the tongue-wagging he had done during the day had tired him, and he marched silently along the lonely, deserted road. He had been in the army when he was young, and there were times, I fancy, when he imagined that he was still a soldier. I found it difficult to keep up with him and from time to time lagged a little distance in his rear. I amused myself by throwing stones at various objects, as boys so often do.

"We had passed a derelict mill, and I was throwing stones into the mill pond when I caught sight of a tall figure moving along parallel with us. It was on the other side of the low wall which skirted the road, and it was advancing in the same direction as ourselves.

"At first I thought it was a woman, but on looking at it more closely I came to the conclusion it was a man, not only on account of its great height—I reckoned it must be at least six feet tall—but also because of its build and its exceedingly long strides.

"There being, as I have stated, a mist, I could not see with any great distinctness what it was wearing. It seemed to be enveloped in some kind of long, flowing garment, which I took to be a fancy dress of sorts, and I concluded it was a gentleman returning home from a New Year's ball.

"Ceasing to throw stones my interest became wholly absorbed in watching the figure and in speculating who it could be. We continued walking along in this fashion for some considerable time, always keeping pretty well abreast of each other, until we came within a short distance of a spot where the wall terminated, and there was a bridge over a stream.

"Well, when we were close to this spot, the moon suddenly began to emerge from behind a bank of clouds and to show itself for the first time that evening.

"What riveted my attention was the figure. I could see it as clearly now as I could see my father, and I was not a little surprised to note that the garments which had puzzled me so sorely were those of a monk.

"I could not see his face because, for one thing, he never looked around at us, and, for another thing, it was partly concealed by a hood. When, however, he came to the bridge he halted, and on my glancing back to see what he was doing, he had vanished.

"The road and fields were bathed in moonbeams, and every object in them was as plainly revealed as if it had been broad daylight, but there was no monk, nor vestige of one.

"Much mystified, I ran after my father and catching him up said, 'Father, did you see that man dressed up as a monk? What has become of him?' I was about to say something else but paused, and stared wonderingly at my father.

"His face in the moonlight looked like a sheet, it was so white. But that was not all. There was an expression of terror in his eyes, his mouth twitched, and his legs shook."

Here my informant stopped for a moment, while he refilled his pipe.

"I can tell you, sir," he went on again, "I was scared. Nothing could have frightened me more than seeing my father, whom I had always regarded as a man of iron nerves, frightened.

" 'What is it, Dad?' I asked, in a very faltering voice.

" 'Charlie,' he replied, and his voice shook. 'Charlie, maybe you've heard someone speak of ghosts. Well, what you saw just now, that monk, was a ghost. Did you see its face?'

" 'No,' I replied.

" 'Thank God for that then,' he responded; 'maybe it won't be so bad after all. Now, not another word about it till we get home.'

"He did not refer to the subject again till we were all seated at breakfast, when he suddenly remarked, 'I told you, Charlie, my boy, that what we both saw last night was a ghost. It was. I saw it once before, about twenty years ago. But neither then nor last night did I see its face, for which I'm thankful.

" 'They say, that is the old folk around here say, it is the ghost of some monk who was once bricked up alive in a monastery, and that periodically it is seen wandering about the countryside. So long as you don't see its face, which, according to report, is terrible, it don't much matter, but should it look at you, then, without doubt, you will die very shortly.

" 'Bill Wiggan, two days before he died, told me he had just seen it on the high road, and that it had looked at him; and it also showed its face to Ben Smith, who died very soon afterward. I reckon you and I, lad, will live a good while yet, but we've had an escape.' "

The Valley of the River of Death

During their career as medical practitioners doctors sometimes come in contact with the supernatural. It was so in the case of Dr. John Wells, who at the beginning of the present century had just bought a practice in a small town in Wales.

Soon after his advent there he was told by an old inhabitant of the town that he would not stay there long. Two of his predecessors had left before they had been there a year. When asked if they could explain the reason of their brief sojourn in the town they would not say.

There certainly did not appear to be any specific reason. There did not seem to be anything materially wrong with the house. It was well built and commodious, and there was nothing the matter with the drainage. It was pleasantly situated. The people were friendly, and the climate was no worse than it was in other parts of Wales. Yet there was something about it that they seemingly did not like.

For the first two or three weeks after Wells had been in his new home, nothing of any particular consequence happened. He liked the house; the rooms were a nice size and well ventilated. The walls and roof were watertight, the outlook pleasant. The people he contacted were not very cordial, but on the other hand they did not appear to be at all inimical, and he was looking forward to a long and very pleasant residence among them.

He was sitting in front of the fire in his sitting room one evening, feeling very tired after working hard all day, when Squint, his fox terrier, who was stretched on the carpet by his side, suddenly growled, and the telephone bell in the hall rang loudly.

He got up, feeling queer, went into the hall, put the receiver to his ear and inquired who was speaking.

"It's I, Jill," a woman replied. "Come at once, darling. Something dreadful has happened."

Wells had no idea who Jill was, but nevertheless he put on his hat and coat, for the weather was cold, got his bicycle and started off. He had as yet little knowledge of the neighborhood, but some strange impelling force guided him. He was himself and yet not himself, and seemed to be in a queer, perplexing daydream.

The road along which he cycled was narrow, rough, and little frequented. It was also very hilly. The scenery on each side of it was rugged and picturesque. A gentle descent led to a wooded valley, through which a river, swollen by recent heavy rain, flowed turbulently. There was something peculiarly weird in the sound.

In the valley, near the river, was a white house. Dr. Wells entered the little garden in front of it, propped his machine against one of the walls and rang the doorbell. A woman answered it. She was young, with brown hair and lovely dark eyes. He somehow knew that she was Jill and that he had known her intimately for some time. Everything about her and the house seemed extraordinarily familiar to him. He gazed longingly and admiringly at her. She was very pretty.

He was not at all surprised when she said, "How kind of you, Charlie, to come here so promptly. It's Henry." And Wells heard his voice saying, "Drunk again?"

"He had been drinking, but he will never drink again; he is dead," Jill said, and then, with ill-concealed joy in her eyes, "Come with me. He's in the dining room."

She took him to a room in the rear of the house. Lying on his back on the floor of it was the body of a man of about forty years of age. He was rather stout, with dark hair streaked with grey, blue eyes, and a mustache.

Wells bent over him. The man smelt of whisky; apparently he had been drinking heavily. But it was not drink that killed him. He had been suffocated. Clenched between his teeth was a fragment of some brown material.

Wells's eyes wandered from the man to Jill. On one side of her neck there was a long red scratch, and a similar one on the back of one of her lovely white hands.

"My dear little Siamese cat, Topsy, did those scratches, Charlie," she said, "and as she tried to bite me I was obliged to have the poor darling put to sleep. I shall miss her dreadfully."

She was wearing a brown dress with long sleeves, and Wells noticed that the cuff of one of the sleeves was torn. The dress was of the same color as the fragment of material in the dead man's mouth.

Seeing the look of horror in his eyes and interpreting his thoughts, Jill gazed appealingly at him and said, "You still love me, Charlie, don't you?"

"Yes," he replied hoarsely. "God forgive me, darling, I still love you. You killed him, didn't you?"

She nodded. "I had to kill him. I couldn't stand him any longer. He was a beast. For heaven's sake don't let me be accused of murdering him. Can't you certify that he had a fit, or his heart was diseased?"

Wells shook his head. "I'm afraid not. It would be too risky. I must try and think of something else."

Although horribly shocked at what she had done, he was madly in love with her. Her beauty intoxicated him. He felt he would risk his reputation, life, and soul to save her from being arrested.

"You look ill," she said. "I will get you some brandy."

While she was out of the room getting the brandy he happened to glance at a large mirror on one of the walls. He saw in it not the face of John Wells, who was fair and clean-shaven, but the face of a man with dark eyes and hair and a short black

beard; a man who might have been several years older than Wells. He did not think it at all strange, and was neither startled nor afraid.

He was looking at various other things in the room when Jill returned with the brandy.

"I have an idea, Charlie," she said. "Will you help me to put the body in the river? The servants are out and won't be back till late. There is no one in the house but ourselves."

Wells marveled at her calmness. She showed no emotion. "Someone passing by the house may see us," he said.

"There is not much fear of that." She laughed. "Very few people pass the house in daytime, and fewer still after dark. People don't like this valley. They say the river is haunted. The local Welsh people are absurdly superstitious. Anyhow, we must take the risk, Charlie, and if you really love me you will do anything to get me out of this jam. I don't at all relish the idea of being hanged." And she shivered.

"I'll help you," Wells exclaimed. "Let me have a peep out of doors to make sure the coast is clear."

"No, darling," Jill said, "I'll do that. You stay in the hall with the body till I come to you."

They carried the body of the dead man into the hall and deposited it near the front door. Jill stole quietly out of the house, and soon returned. "No one is about," she said.

They carried the body to the river and threw it as far as they could into the raging, roaring water. There was something very horrible about the river. Wells could well imagine that it harbored dreadful spirits that tempted people to commit evil deeds. He was only too thankful when their task was done and they got back to the house. Jill insisted on his having more brandy.

"How did you do it?" he inquired, while they were sitting drinking.

"He was lying on the floor," she said. "I got a cushion and put it on his face. He struggled and scratched me, but I am very strong and he was too drunk to offer much resistance. I sat on

the cushion till he ceased to move. He was dead when I took the cushion away. It was really quite easy, and I am only too glad I did it. I hated him and it is a blessed relief to be free. There's not any fear of being found out, is there?"

"I don't think so," Wells said. "Everyone knows he drank, and it will be thought that he walked into the river when he was drunk. There are no marks of violence on him, and if no one saw us with the body, I think we are safe."

She threw her arms around his neck and kissed him. "You are a darling to help me, Charlie," she said. "I love you dearly. I have always loved you. I wish I could ask you to stay here tonight, but the servants will be back about twelve—I gave them leave to stay out late—and it wouldn't look well if they found you here."

She gave him more brandy in spite of his remonstrances, kissed him repeatedly, then saw him go. He felt rather fuddled when he mounted his machine, for he was not used to spirits and had never drunk so much brandy.

The night had grown dark. Heavy clouds obscured the moon. A storm was brewing. The roaring of the haunted river and the thought of what was in it made him shudder.

He pedaled hard to get out of the valley and was on the brink of a very steep descent when his lamp burned low. He thought this odd because he remembered filling the lamp before he left home.

He got off his machine, and when he looked at the lamp he found it was not his. That made him look at the machine. This, too, was not his, but in the dark and in his fuddled state he might easily have mistaken it for his own bicycle as it was of a very similar pattern.

He asked himself how it could have happened. He knew the exact spot where he had put his machine when he got to the white house, and it was from that very spot he had taken this strange bicycle. No other bicycle was there. If it had been a bright night a cyclist passing the house might possibly have

looked in the garden and, seeing his machine, have effected an exchange. But something told him that no such thing had happened, and that it was someone in the house who had taken his machine.

And Jill had said the servants were out; no one was in the house but themselves. If that was really so, it looked as if it must have been Jill. But what was her motive? Was it merely because she had a sudden fancy for his bicycle? But it was a man's bicycle. Women did not ride men's bicycles, or did they?

He was too fuddled to think. If the lamp went out he would trust to luck to find his way home in the dark. There was little fear of meeting a policeman. He had never seen one on a Welsh country road at night and very rarely in the daytime.

He began to descend the hill, and he had not gone more than a yard or two before his lamp went out. His speed increased rapidly. He sought to check it, but to his dismay the brake would not act. Faster and faster he went, the night air whistling in his ears. There was a sudden terrific impact with something hard, and then a complete blackout.

When he recovered consciousness he found himself sitting before the fire in his sitting room, with Squint lying on the floor by his side. It took him some minutes to realize he was alive and once again his own self—John Wells.

The following day he met an old gentleman named Allison, and to him he related his strange experience. "Of course it was only a dream," he said, "but it was extraordinarily vivid."

Mr. Allison looked inquiringly at him. "Have you ever heard of Mrs. Martin and Dr. Charles Griffiths?" he asked.

Dr. Wells shook his head. "Never."

"Are you sure?"

"Quite sure."

"And you have never been to the valley which is known locally as the Valley of the River of Death because of the number of people found drowned in it?"

"No. Why?"

"Because," Mr. Allison said, "you have just described it—a valley with a roaring river and a solitary white house. Rather more than twenty years ago Mrs. Jill Martin lived in that house. Her husband, Henry Martin, was a jolly man, very popular in the neighborhood but too fond of whisky. He often came home drunk. Jill, who was partly French, was very pretty and had many admirers, among them Dr. Charles Griffiths, whose face you saw in the glass. He was about forty-five years of age, with dark hair and eyes and a short black beard. You could not have described Jill and Charles more accurately if you had seen them in the flesh. Martin was found drowned one day in the valley river. It was much swollen at the time owing to recent heavy rain, and it was supposed that he had walked into it when he was drunk. About the time that this happened Griffiths met with a fatal accident. He was riding one of those high bicycles, the predecessors of the present-day safety machines, one dark night, and when descending a very steep hill his brake would not act, with the result that he ran into a wall and was killed. After what you have told me it looks as if Jill not only murdered her husband but cunningly contrived to get Griffiths out of the way, too."

"What happened to her?" Wells asked.

"Oh, within a short time after Henry's death she married a foreigner, sold her house, and went to South America.

"She did not survive her second marriage long, for she and her husband were drowned at sea."

Stag-Headed Men of Hate

THE following story of a very queer haunting was told me one day in the 1890's, when I was living in Dublin, by an old sailor named Patrick Ryan.[1]

It was Christmas Eve in the fifties of the last century, nearly midnight, and most of the inhabitants of Waterford were in bed. In a small house close to the river Ryan's cousin, Eli Hayson, was trying his hardest to go to sleep.

He heard suddenly the footsteps of someone running at a great speed along the waterfront. There was something so peculiar about the footsteps that he got up and looked out the window. It was a bright moonlight night and every object on the quay stood out, almost as clearly revealed as in the daytime.

Several small vessels were at moorage in the river. Racing toward the house from the river was a young man in a wool jacket and blue trousers. Something in his build and manner of running seemed familiar, but it was not until he was within a few yards of the house, and the moonlight illuminated his very white face, that Eli recognized him.

It was his twin brother, Jack, who he thought was in the vessel *Thomas Emery* at Cork. He was about to call out to him to ask how he got there when he saw several shadowy figures rise from the water and steal furtively after Jack. He opened his mouth to shout and warn Jack but his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth and his voice died in his throat. Jack rushed at the door and tried to wrench it open. The shadowy forms

[1] *Empire News,* 1921.

closed in on him and clutched hold of him with their long, ugly arms. Jack screamed, "For heaven's sake save me!" His face was convulsed with terror so great and appalling that his features were hardly recognizable.

The moon disappeared behind a bank of dark clouds, and when they cleared away Jack and the shadowy figures were nowhere to be seen. Eli, frightened and perplexed, went back to bed and presently fell asleep.

Two days after Christmas Eli's father received a letter from the captain of the *Thomas Emery* saying that Jack had fallen overboard, while walking in his sleep, and had been drowned.

Mr. Hayson went to the inquest at Cork and said Jack had never been known at home to walk in his sleep. Several of the crew of the *Thomas Emery,* however, swore that they had constantly seen him get out of his bunk while asleep and walk about the ship. A verdict of "found drowned" was returned.

The Hayson family were very far from satisfied and were convinced that Eli's ghostly vision strongly suggested that Jack had met with foul play. They made exhaustive inquiries about the captain and crew of the *Thomas Emery,* and were ceaseless in their endeavors to find anyone who could give them any information about what happened on the night Jack was alleged to have walked in his sleep, but it was of no avail.

Years passed. Mr. and Mrs. Hayson died, and Eli was left alone. He often thought of his strange experience on that eventful Christmas Eve, but he had long abandoned all hope of solving the mystery of his brother's death, and was genuinely surprised when a possible explanation to it was suddenly brought to his notice. He was sitting one evening in the parlor of a small hotel in Cork, where he was well known, when the landlord suddenly remarked, "By the way, there's an old man in the town who knows something that may interest you."

"What's it about?" Eli asked at once.

"Cork," the landlord replied guardedly. "I advise you to visit

him and not delay too long as, from all accounts, he is in a very poor way."

He gave Eli the old man's address, and Eli called on him that very night. At first the old man, whose name was Matthew Webster, was not very willing to talk, but, after some persuasion, he at length told his story.

"It really concerns my boy, Tom," he began. "He will have been dead eight weeks come next Wednesday. Well, one night —I forget whether it was Christmas Eve or Christmas Day now, my memory has got so queer—about twenty years ago, he was on night duty on the quay of a certain town."

"Cork?" Eli ventured.

"I can't give no names," Matthew replied. "I promised Tom I wouldn't, and no one in our family ever breaks their word. Never been known to.

"Well, at about the beginning of the middle watch, about midnight I mean, Tom, who was sitting in front of a shed by the side of a brazier, dozing, was suddenly aroused by the sound of footsteps. He got up, and peeping cautiously around the side of the shed, for he was ever on the lookout for thieves, saw, to his amazement, three extraordinary figures stealing silently and stealthily from out of the gloom toward the water's edge. Though their bodies were like men's, and clad in ordinary sailors' togs, their heads were not human at all, but were the heads of animals—stags, and a very queer kind of ape.

"The sight of these strange beings was altogether so unexpected and alarming that Tom was for a moment or so terrified, but, curiosity at length overcoming fear, he crept out of his hiding place and followed them.

"Down the steep and slippery quay steps they went and, stepping into a boat that lay alongside, they rowed off in the direction of a schooner that lay at her moorings about a hundred yards from the shore.

"Tom watched them board the schooner and, as soon as they were out of sight, he jumped into another boat and boarded the

schooner, too, concealing himself behind a pile of gear and casks that lay in the stern of the vessel.

"He hadn't been more than a few seconds in this position, when he heard loud shrieks of terror, accompanied by the most bloodcurdling moans and groans, and, presently, up the companion ladder there came a young man about Tom's age, racing for his life. He was followed by the grotesque trio that had just boarded the schooner.

"The moon was up at the time, and Tom could see the awful look of terror in the youth's face as he shrieked out, 'Save me. For God's sake save me!'

"Tom rushed out from his hiding place but, before he could reach him, the youth, with a frenzied cry of horror, had jumped overboard. Tom was a powerful swimmer, and could have saved the youth, but was prevented by the trio, who seized him and held him fast, thus proving themselves not ghosts, but only men of flesh and blood like himself.

"Tom then saw that the animals' heads were merely mummers' masks, and it did not take him long to discover the whole affair was simply a diabolical plot to get rid of the youth, who, for some reason Tom could not even guess at, had incurred the bitter animosity of his fellow seamen.

"The youth was obviously of a very nervous and highly strung disposition, and the trio had come on board in masks, evidently masquerading as ghosts, to frighten him to death.

"Two of them were for killing Tom outright, but the third, who seemed to possess a certain amount of authority, persuaded them to spare him, on condition that he took his most solemn oath that he would never tell a soul what he had seen and heard that night. Tom took the oath and, after they had told him what would happen to him should he divulge the secret, they allowed him to go."

"And you say this happened about twenty years ago?" Eli observed, when old Matthew paused. "Can you give me the date?"

"Yes, I think so," Matthew said, tottering feebly to an ancient chest of drawers and extracting from it a small pocketbook. "December 24th."

"I thought so," Eli replied tremulously. "That is the exact date of my brother Jack's death."

The Horror of the Pool

As I HAVE already remarked, there are many traditions and stories of ghostly happenings associated with my branch of the old O'Donnells and my grandmother's family, the Vizes of Cork and Limerick. There are also many stories of the supernatural associated with my O'Brien and Maunsell forebears.

My father, who collected many of these stories, and was deeply interested in ghost-lore, contacted the supernatural himself on more than one occasion.

The adventure I am about to relate occurred while my father was an undergraduate at Trinity College, Dublin. He arranged one long vacation to go on a walking tour in the west of Ireland with his friend Bob Hunt, of Limerick. As Hunt was unexpectedly detained my father set off alone.

He came one day, after a long tramp through a wild and barren country, to a wayside pool. My father did not excel in games but he was a good swimmer. Feeling very hot and sticky, for the day was very close, he decided to bathe. The road was lonely and little frequented; there were no motorists in those days. He took off his clothes and plunged into the pool. He was surprised to find that, despite the heat, the water was extremely cold. The blazing sunrays did not appear to affect the temperature. A few rapid strokes took him to the far side of the pool. He was preparing to turn about when he fancied he was no longer alone in the pool, that some horrible thing was getting ready to seize him. He scrambled out of the water in a panic. Seeing nothing to account for his alarm, he laughed, and blamed himself for being so easily frightened. He leaped into the pool again, and

was about halfway across it when he experienced the same sensation, only in an even more terrifying degree. He struck out wildly for the shore, expecting every moment to feel clammy arms or tentacles clutch hold of him. He put on his clothes, without drying himself properly, and did not feel safe until he was out of sight of the pool.

He did not see it again for several years. In the meanwhile much had happened in his life. He had graduated at T.C.D., and at the earnest desire of his mother had resigned a commission in the army and taken holy orders. He was visiting his mother in Limerick when he felt an urge to see once again the pool of horror by the lonely roadside. He went there accompanied by one of his Limerick friends. They were gazing at the still, dark water, when they were joined by a stranger, who told them that he owned a house within a short distance of the pool. My father had not noticed the house until the stranger pointed it out to him. "It is surely new," my father exclaimed; "I can't remember seeing it when I was here a few years ago."

"It was built exactly three years ago," the stranger said. "I bought it, and now I am anxious to sell it. This pool seems to interest you. You are not thinking of bathing in it, are you?"

My father shook his head. "No! Once was quite enough." He told the stranger what had happened when he was last there. "It was just my imagination, of course," he said.

"I don't think so," the stranger remarked. "Do you believe in the supernatural? You should do, as you are a clergyman. At least I take you for one in those clothes."

"I am a clergyman, and I do believe in the supernatural," my father said. "Are you trying to tell me that this pool is haunted?"

"Can you spare a few minutes?" the stranger asked. "What I have to say won't take very long."

My father and his friend said they would be very interested to listen to anything that he had to tell them about the pool.

"I am a widower," the stranger began. "My two nieces live

with me, and I have an old woman, who cooks and does various other things.

"I was the first occupant of the house yonder, and while I lived in it hardly a night passed without something very disturbing happening. We all had terrifying dreams and were awakened by queer noises—creakings, the rattling of door handles, the soft, padding footsteps on the stairs, and even in our rooms. One night my youngest niece felt her bed rise up and down, as if there was someone under it trying to frighten her. I heard her scream and ran to her room at once. I found her unconscious. She had fainted, and was quite alone in the room. A few nights later I had a similar experience. I sprang out of bed, lit a candle, and searched the house. There was no one in it but our four selves. The doors, front and back, were locked and bolted; the windows on the ground floor were latched and shuttered. No one from outside had entered. There was only one satisfactory explanation, namely the supernatural.

"Weeks passed, and then one night the cook screamed. I ran to her room, and found her terrified. She declared that something spongy and clammy had crawled on to the bed and tried to smother her.

"I had the greatest difficulty in pacifying her. She expressed the odd belief that the thing that was haunting the house and frightening us so much came from the pool. She is a native of Kerry, and like so many of the Munster people is a firm believer in phockas, leprechauns, and spirits of all kinds.

"Neither I nor my nieces had ever liked this pool. We felt that there was something very unpleasant about it, and fond as we were of swimming, we had never cared to bathe in it. I hope I am not boring you."

My father and his friend told him that they were very interested and wanted him to continue.

"Well, one night," he said, "I kept watch outside the house, and at about half past one o'clock I saw a shadowy figure approach the house from the direction of the pool. It gave me the

impression of something pulpy and loathsome without any definite shape. I moved hastily out of the way and saw it enter the house. A few minutes later I heard screams, and found one of my nieces half mad with terror. She said she heard the bedroom door open and something cold and slimy touched her cheek and forehead. That settled me. Convinced that the house was haunted by something evil and harmful, I shut it up and rented a cottage about a mile and a half from here. I go to the house once or twice a week to air it, but never at night."

"Have you any idea why this pool should be haunted?" my father asked.

"No," he replied. "I have been told that pools and lakes in lonely localities sometimes attract a species of spirit that is particularly terrifying and dangerous. More I cannot say. The whys and wherefores of the supernatural are quite beyond our ken, and will probably ever remain so."

The Woman in Red

THIS narrative relating to Amelia Jenkyns and the Woman in Red has come to me in a rather roundabout way. It owes its origin to a story told to a Maunsell relation of my grandmother by Mrs. de Courcey, a resident in Cork. She heard it somewhat fragmentarily from Andy O'Leary, a youth of seventeen years of age, who did errands for her and was generally regarded not quite as a moron but as rather simple. Through my grandmother the story has descended to me, and I have included it in this volume.

About the thirties of the last century there was a girl in Cork named Amelia Jenkyns. She had no parents and was in an orphanage until a Mrs. Bishop engaged her as a maid of all work. She had only one friend in the world, Andy O'Leary, who also did odd jobs for Mrs. Bishop. She told him everything, and he got to know her almost as well as she knew herself; otherwise this story could not have been written.

They both admired Mrs. Bishop and thought her very beautiful, yet they stood in great awe of her and were in constant fear of giving her offence. She was generous as regards food. Andy and Amelia had all their meals together in the kitchen, and they had no cause to grumble at their fare. Amelia did the cooking.

Mrs. Bishop never had a meal in the house, only a cup of coffee early in the morning, which Amelia took to her. Where she went was a mystery to Andy and Amelia, who longed to know. Andy had heard it said that Mrs. Bishop was often seen entering the finest hotel in Cork, that she knew the richest people in the city, and bought her clothes at the most expensive

shops. She was always dressed very smartly. She had big blue eyes, a slightly retroussé nose, a pretty mouth with lovely teeth, yellow hair, and beautiful hands with tapering fingers and filbert nails.

Amelia took a great fancy to one of her dresses. It was a red dress with large, shining buttons all down the front of it. Andy and Amelia thought it very attractive. Mrs. Bishop had on one occasion caught Amelia examining one of her mantles that was in the hall, and had threatened to beat her if she ever touched any of her clothes again. Amelia had never forgotten the cruel look in Mrs. Bishop's eyes.

The red dress was kept in a locked room. Andy and Amelia longed to see what else was in that room. It was a great mystery to them. They also wanted to learn more about Mrs. Bishop, who was a never-ceasing enigma to them.

"Do you know what Mrs. Bishop's husband was?" Amelia inquired of the milkman, who seemed to have taken a fancy to her. Anyway, to Andy's annoyance, he used to bring her flowers.

"No," the milkman replied. "An independent gentleman, I believe. He died abroad, so it was said. Somewhere in the south of France, where the rich folk spend the winter. He had white hair and looked old enough to be her father."

"Was she fond of him, I wonder?" Amelia said. "I can't imagine her being very fond of anyone."

The milkman laughed. "It isn't fashionable for womenfolk to be fond of their husbands nowadays," he rejoined. "Aren't you happy here?"

Amelia shrugged her shoulders. "So-so, but I suppose if I left I might do worse."

"Then I advise you to remain where you are," the milkman responded. "Anyhow, till you can hear of a better place."

Amelia thanked him for his advice, and there it ended, at least for that day. It was soon after this conversation that she had a strange dream about the locked-up room. She thought

she saw Mrs. Bishop go to a board on the right-hand side of the drawing room fireplace, and take a key from the cavity under it. Then, key in hand, Mrs. Bishop went to the mysterious room at the end of the passage, unlocked it, and entered. Amelia dreamed she followed her as far as the door and tried to peep inside, but Mrs. Bishop was too quick for her. The door slammed in her face, and she saw nothing but a bedstead, a black oak fourposter, standing in the middle of the room. She stood outside and listened, and presently heard the clink of coins.

"It is as I have suspected all along," she said to herself; "there's money in there, heaps of it. Mrs. Bishop's a miser." She thought she put her eye to the keyhole, and that something hot and burning ran into it. The pain was so acute she awoke. The dream was so vivid it made a great impression on her, and she became more curious than ever to see inside the room. "If I can only get hold of some of that money," she said to herself, "I'll run off. London is a big city. There must be plenty of good hiding places in it, where the police would never find me. Besides, if I am caught, prison is not such a bad place, far better than the workhouse, and probably as good as this. It's worth trying, anyhow."

She waited impatiently for an opportunity to see if the dream were true, but always, just as she had screwed up the courage to go into the drawing room and try the boards by the fireplace, something happened to prevent her. Once she fancied she heard footsteps following her stealthily across the hall to the drawing room. She turned around in terror, fully expecting to encounter the gaze of the awe-inspiring china-blue eyes but, to her relief and astonishment, no one was there. On another occasion, when she stole downstairs in the dead of night, she fancied she could hear footsteps creeping down the stairs after her. She made up her mind, if it was Mrs. Bishop, she would pretend she was walking in her sleep.

She had never been to the theater, but Andy had told her about the only play he had ever seen. "I'll play-act," she kept

saying to herself, and when she arrived at the foot of the stairs, she turned slowly around and looked, but there was no one. An uncanny feeling now came over her, and it grew so strong that she ran to her room in panic, and never ventured to leave it again in the dead of night. Then one day the long anticipated opportunity occurred.

"I am going out for the day, Amelia," Mrs. Bishop said to her, "and I may not be back until the evening."

She went off in her newest gown and bonnet.

Amelia watched her turn the corner of the street, and then, after waiting a few minutes, ran to her bedroom to have a good look at her hats and clothes. There was one hat that Amelia loved. It was a real Tuscany leghorn hat. Amelia had often longed to wear it, and now was her chance. She put it on in front of the mirror. She was not a bad-looking girl, and the hat suited her. Pleased with the effect, she put on a silk dress and strutted about the room in it, continually pausing to look at herself in the mirror.

There was some rouge in a box on the dressing table. She could not resist dabbing a little of it on her thin cheeks. Then she put on a pair of French boots with very high heels and tapped over the floor in them.

She resolved to put her dream to the test.

With a fast beating heart and many glances around her to make sure there was no sign of her greatly dreaded mistress, she fetched Andy, and they both stole to the drawing room. Amelia rapped on the door.

There was no reply. She rapped again, and on there being still no reply, she opened the door and they both entered. The sun pouring through the windows made the room so bright and cheery that Amelia quite forgot her fears and went boldly to the fireplace. She tried several boards, and then to her joyful surprise one appeared to be loose. She raised it up with one of the kitchen knives, and in the cavity under it was a key. Her dream,

then, was true. "Oh, if only the money is there," she said to herself, "it's good-bye to this slavery. I shall be free. Free and rich."

Shaking with excitement, she ran off at once to the mystery room, followed by Andy, and with feverish haste inserted the key in the lock. The door opened at last, and the interior of the room was exposed to Amelia's view. In the middle of it she saw, as in her dream, an antique fourposter bed of black oak, and in one corner of the room an iron safe. Apart from these two articles, the room contained only one or two chairs and a mirror. The mirror fascinated Amelia—mirrors always did—and she was looking at herself in it, thinking that if only she had the money to dress nicely, she might go to the theater and hotels, when she gave an involuntary start.

The bed behind her was very clearly reflected in the mirror, and in it she and Andy saw an old man with white hair and a white mustache. He was lying on his back, apparently asleep. Suddenly, from out of the cupboard in the wall, by the fireplace, emerged a woman. It was Mrs. Bishop, and yet not Mrs. Bishop, for, like the man in the bed, there was something filmy and unreal about her. She was wearing a blue satin gown. On one of her wrists was a massive gold bracelet, and on her white fingers were sparkling, jeweled rings. Amelia gazed admiringly at them. She loved jewelry. Tiptoeing with feline stealth to the bed, the woman picked up a pillow, and with a dreadful expression in her blue eyes she placed the pillow very carefully over the face of the sleeping man, and pressed it down with the weight of her whole body. Amelia uttered a cry of horror, whereupon the man and the woman immediately vanished, and Amelia and Andy were once again alone in the room.

They were so shocked that it was some time before they ventured to move. Amelia felt that what she had witnessed was a ghostly re-enactment of what had actually occurred; that the old man in the bed was Mrs. Bishop's husband, and that Mrs. Bishop had murdered him.

"I'll get the money," she said to Andy, "and then we'll get away from here, you and I."

Andy nodded. Amelia knew he would go anywhere with her, do anything she wished him to do.

She tried to open the safe, and after much fingering she accidentally pressed a spring, and the door flew open. The inside of the safe was full of golden coins—Amelia had never seen sovereigns—rings, bracelets, necklaces. Amelia's eyes almost fell out of her head with awe and admiration. "My word," she said to herself, "here are treasures. They are real gold and real precious stones. I know. Mrs. Bishop stole them. She's a thief as well as a murderess. That accounts for her always keeping this room locked. She's afraid of anyone finding her out. I'll try some of them on. My, how smart I shall look!"

In her excitement she forgot her fear. She slipped first one bangle on her grimy little wrist, then another, then a bracelet, and after that another. Then covered with jewelry she looked at herself in the mirror, and went into ecstasies of delight. Suddenly the door opened, and Mrs. Bishop, now in the flesh and blood, the real, physical Mrs. Bishop, wearing the entrancing red dress with the glittering, large red buttons, entered the room. Andy darted with extraordinary celerity under the bed, but Amelia was far too terrified to move. She stood rooted to the floor, trembling from head to foot.

"So," Mrs. Bishop exclaimed, in a cold, calm, emotionless voice, "I've caught you at last, prying into my secrets. Not content with wearing my hats, you are wearing my jewels. Take them off at once."

Amelia obeyed her. Mrs. Bishop caught hold of her right arm, her sharp nails digging into Amelia's flesh. "Come with me," Mrs. Bishop said. She led Amelia out of the room and house. Andy followed them, keeping a little distance in their rear, ever alert to hide at once should Mrs. Bishop glance behind her. Through street after street they went till they came

to the River Lee. Moored close alongside its shore was a small yacht.

Mrs. Bishop stepped lightly onto its deck, dragging Amelia with her. She took her into the cabin and told her to kneel in front of her. Amelia meekly knelt; she dared not disobey. The cold blue eyes of the woman rendered her powerless. The beautiful white hands and the shining red buttons fascinated her terribly. She was like a rabbit under the hypnotic spell of a ravenous snake.

Mrs. Bishop produced a long piece of wire. "Do you know what this is for?" she asked. Amelia shook her head. She tried to speak but her voice died in her throat. She could not utter a sound. "You will soon find out," Mrs. Bishop said. "I'm going to put it so." And she coiled it carefully around Amelia's neck. Amelia did not move: she could not. "You've no friends, no parents, nobody to make any inquiries about you, little drab," Mrs. Bishop said, and she drew the wire tighter and tighter.

Andy, who had seen and heard everything—the door had not been closed properly—and, to his discredit, had been far too frightened to interfere, fled. So great was his dread of Mrs. Bishop that he dared not mention what had happened for several weeks, when he ventured to tell Mrs. de Courcey. She told the police, but they pooh-poohed the idea of Mrs. Bishop's having murdered anyone. They questioned Andy, who was very scared and gave such a confused version of what he had told Mrs. de Courcey that the police did not regard it seriously.

They, nevertheless, interrogated Mrs. Bishop, and believed her when she told them, with every appearance of sincerity, that Amelia had run away, a thing she had done on two previous occasions, and that she, Mrs. Bishop, had no idea of Amelia's whereabouts. No further steps were taken in the matter.

Some weeks elapsed before Amelia's body was found in the Lee, and it was then far too decomposed to show she had met

her death other than by drowning. Mrs. Bishop left Cork soon after the discovery of the body, and was never known to visit that city again. What ultimately became of her no one in Cork knew or cared. She had made few acquaintances and no friends, at least none of any social standing.

For many months the River Lee at Cork was haunted nightly by the phantom of a young, poorly clad girl in black, with a white face and a very scared look in her eyes.

PART III

Haunted Trees and Forests

The Haunted Christmas Tree

In the days of my Irish grandmother there was standing in Dublin, not very far from St. Stephen's Green, a large old detached house with a massive, nail-studded front door and high windows. It had stood empty for some years after the death of its last owner, a foreign lady who led a very secluded life. Grass had grown in the crevices of the doorsteps, the iron railings fronting the house had become loosened in their stone sockets, and the roof badly needed repairing.

The interior of the house had that damp, earthy smell peculiar to buildings that have been vacated for a long time. Cobwebs festooned the walls and floors, and the cupboards and holes harbored rats and mice and nasty long-legged crawling creatures.

A new landlord had it made at least habitable and let it furnished to my grandmother's relatives, the Launays. They took it on a three years' lease and began their tenancy one autumn in the 1840's. Mrs. Launay was delighted with the house. She reveled in the paneling of the walls, the Florentine ornamentation of some of the ceilings; the furniture, which was in keeping with the architecture and remindful of the days of apple-blossom sacques, cherry-colored satin petticoats, high-heeled shoes, of minuets and masked fancy-dress balls; the spinet that stood near the old-world fireplace in the drawing room, and the harp that occupied a corner of the wide, stone-flagged, echoing hall. Everything conjured up in her mind the far-off days of Dutch William III and his Stuart wife. She loved to read of those quaint, romantic, picturesque times.

It was not until the Launays had been in the house for some weeks that anything happened to disturb them. Mrs. Launay was alone in the drawing room one cold November evening when she heard the children, who were in bed, scream. She got up at once and ran into the hall. A dark figure was ascending the wide hall staircase.

Wondering who it could be, as she had given the servants permission to go to the circus, she spoke and asked which of the maids was there. The figure turned, and Mrs. Launay saw to her horror that it was headless. A gruesome light surrounded it. After standing still for a moment or two it continued mounting the stairs, and disappeared around a bend in them.

As soon as Mrs. Launay could pull herself sufficiently together she raced up the staircase, fearful lest the apparition should enter the children's bedroom. There was no sign of it. The children had not seen anything but had heard a strange noise in the room. Mrs. Launay succeeded in pacifying them and went back to the drawing room, in dread of seeing the gruesome apparition again.

To her great relief the servants returned very shortly after, and the next day Colonel Launay came home. He had been obliged to go to London. She told him about the headless apparition, and he laughed and said it must have been an hallucination or she had imagined it.

A few days later when they were in the dining room they heard a plaintive air on the spinet. The colonel ran at once to the drawing room to see who was there. He returned very soon, trying to appear calm.

"I shouldn't have laughed at you, my dear," he said, "for I have just seen your ghost. It's not very nice but quite harmless."

"I am not so sure," Mrs. Launay said. "It gave me a shock, and I can tell it's given you one, too."

They debated for a long time whether they should leave the house. It was the children they had to consider; supposing the

children saw the ghost, the shock would be terrible. They might either die of fright or be very seriously, perhaps permanently, affected mentally. Ought they to risk such a possibility? There were two children, Moira and Molly, eight-year-old twins. How would it be for Mrs. Launay to sleep in their room? It was a large room and they would feel safe with her. They decided to give the idea a trial.

Several weeks went by without any further ghostly happenings. It was now December. Guy Lorrimer, Mrs. Launay's brother, came to spend Christmas with them. He was a lawyer, young, strong, genial, and very normal, not the least degree imaginative. He laughed heartily when the Launays told him about the ghost, and declared that they were victims of sensory illusions due to overstrained nerves or acute indigestion. He scoffed at the idea of ghosts.

The day after his arrival he was in his bedroom getting ready for dinner when he saw a dark figure emerge from under his bed and crawl on all fours toward a cupboard in one of the walls. He threw a boot at the figure, and the boot passed right through it. It entered the cupboard, and there was a loud chuckling laugh. He peered into the cupboard, but there was nothing there—only a few black beetles that scurried away, scared by the candle. He tried to persuade himself that what he had seen and heard were imagery, but his senses refused to entertain such a belief.

That evening when Colonel and Mrs. Launay and Guy Lorrimer were in the dining room they heard many footsteps in the hall, and the harp and spinet playing. They listened in amazement. The colonel threw open the door and he and Lorrimer searched the hall and drawing room. There was no one there; all was dark and silent.

The Launays were giving a party for Moira and Molly on Christmas Eve. There was to be a Christmas tree in the drawing room, laden with lovely presents for the two little girls and

their friends. Mrs. Launay was very busy during the morning of December twenty-third, hanging the presents on the tree and getting the room ready for the party.

After tea they all crossed the hall to put a few more presents on the tree. On opening the drawing room door they were startled to see the room illuminated with an eerie light. Lying on the floor was the headless body of a woman. A tall, lithe, swarthy-complexioned man stood over it, a glittering, horn-handled knife in one of his hairy hands. Standing close to him was a slender, foreign-looking girl, richly dressed in the style of the early eighteenth century, her arms and breast blazing with jewels.

She had lovely features, but her beauty was marred by the evil in her eyes. She pointed exultingly to the tree. All the presents which Mrs. Launay had hung so carefully on it were scattered on the floor, many of them broken, and hanging in the center of the tree was the decapitated head of a woman with long black hair and wide-open, glassy eyes. There was a peal of diabolical laughter, and the vision faded away, leaving the room in pitch darkness.

The Launays left the house within a week. It was some time before they all recovered from the shock that they had sustained. Colonel Launay made exhaustive inquiries regarding the early history of the house but could discover nothing in explanation of the haunting.[1]

[1] The house it was believed to be was still standing when I was a boy.

Possibly Metamorphosis

Among my friends in London who were interested in the supernatural was the late Dr. Maxwill, the head of a large suburban mental home. I am indebted to him for many strange stories, one of which is the following:

In the course of a conversation he had at his club one day with a stockbroker named West, who lived near Reigate, the latter said, "You will doubtless think I ought to be one of your patients when I tell you about a curious experience I had in my garden one evening last week. It is so utterly fantastic. I was taking an after-dinner stroll on the lawn when something made me pause and look at an elm tree in a corner of the garden. It was old and its trunk was covered with ugly protuberances. It repelled and yet attracted me. My wife detested it and was very anxious for me to have it destroyed. She declared that it was horribly magnetic, and that whenever she was in the garden she could feel it endeavoring to draw her to it.

"As I stood staring at it, it gradually became misty, branches and trunk faded away, and I saw in its place a figure resembling a tall, lean man with a hawklike nose, a red beard, gold-rimmed spectacles, and glittering light eyes. There was something so sinister and menacing in the man's expression that I recoiled and muttered a prayer, whereupon the figure dissolved and I found myself once again confronting the tree.

"It sounds dreadfully fantastic, and you will probably say I was paranoiac and that it was just an hallucination. Whatever it was I had no desire to experience a repeat, and the following

day I had the tree uprooted and removed from the garden, much to my wife's relief."

"Your story has interested me very much," Dr. Maxwill said. "Where exactly do you live?"

West told him.

"Odd!" Maxwill exclaimed. "Did you ever see Dr. Wilfred Bland?"

West shook his head. "No. Who is he?"

"A doctor of science, who lived in your house some years ago. The description of the figure you saw in your garden tallies with Bland, who was one of my patients. He was a professor of physics, physiology, and various other 'ologies' at Bracton University. He had a string of letters after his name. Not content with being a recognized authority on subjects relative to the wholly physical, he took to dabbling in psychical research, mesmerism and alchemy, with the result that he became mental.

"He was not one of our dangerous patients and at times seemed sane enough. At other times during a relapse he would rave about ESP, ectoplasmic phenomena, alchemistical philosophy, transmutation, metempsychosis, metamorphosis, telekinesis, mesmeric, crystalline and magnetic forces, regarding all of which subjects I know little or nothing. He raved about experiments in projection, and declared he had visited the Gobi Desert and the South Pole in his astral body.

"He talked frequently about an elm tree in his garden and declared that he could at any time project his immaterial ego into it, and that he and the tree were on such intimate terms that they frequently exchanged bodies, and while he was sometimes in the physical tree, the spirit of the tree was in his physical body.

"Until you told me your experience in the garden, I regarded what he said as the mere ramblings of the insane, but I'm not so sure now."

West stared. "Do you really think that what happened that night in the garden was a case of metamorphosis?"

"It certainly seems as if it may have been. On which day last week did you see the figure like Bland?"

"Monday," West said.

"And the day you had the tree destroyed?"

"Tuesday."

"The hour?"

"About ten in the morning. It was cut down then but the uprooting of it was not finished for several days."

"That is rather strange," Dr. Maxwill said, "because Bland, who had seemed to be perfectly well up till Tuesday, died suddenly that same day between ten and eleven."

The Haunted Shrubbery

I WAS sitting in the lounge of my club in Whitehall Court, London, one afternoon, resting after a busy morning in the city, when I was joined by my friend, Dr. Maxwill. After we had been chatting for some time he said, "I heard a strange story the other day that I think may interest you. It was told to my new colleague, Dr. Rudd, when he was at a private mental home in the Midlands. His informant was a patient named George Gill.

"Gill was walking along a road in Gloucestershire one summer night when it began to rain. The weather had been very close all day and he was not at all surprised when there was a flash of lightning, followed very shortly by the rumbling of thunder. He had neither overcoat nor umbrella and, not wanting to be drenched as he was subject to rheumatism, in spite of the warnings he had so often heard against sheltering under a tree during a thunderstorm, he stood beneath a lime tree on one side of the road.

"For quite a time the rain descended in torrents, the lightning flashed in vivid forks, and the thunder roared. Thick as was the foliage of the tree, the heaviest drops of rain beat their way through the leaves and reached him. Fortunately the storm was of short duration; presently the sky cleared and the moon once again appeared.

"Quitting the friendly tree, Gill was continuing his trudge along the road when he heard footsteps in his rear. Tired after a long day's outing, he was walking slower than was his wont,

and a voice presently bade him good evening. To his surprise it was a woman. She was about thirty years of age, slender and rather above the average height of a woman. She wore a dark coat and a hat which struck him as somewhat quaint. She spoke and looked like a lady, and he wondered who she was and why she was out alone at such a late hour.

" 'Do you mind if I walk a little way with you?' she asked. 'I live near here. What a heavy storm it was; I hope you didn't get very wet.'

" 'Just a little,' he said. 'And you?'

" 'Oh, I have a coat,' she said. 'I never mind storms; in fact I rather enjoy them. The more it thunders the better I like it.'

"She asked him how far he was going. He told her, and she said it was a long distance and she would be very pleased if he would rest for a while at her house, dry himself, and have a hot drink.

"Had he not been chilly in his damp clothes and very tired he might have demurred. As it was, however, he gladly accepted her offer of hospitality and walked with her. They kept to the road until they came to a green wooden gate on one side of the road.

" 'This is my home,' the woman said. 'It is called The Shrubbery. It is a very unpretentious little place, just one story, but it suits me. I hate big houses; I lived in one once.'

"She opened the gate. A long path, lined on each side with laurels, led to a small white house. He was following her up the path, which was darkened in places by the bushes, when he heard a giggle. It sounded very close to him and made him start. He turned sharply around, but there was nothing to be seen but the bushes and their black shadows.

"The house was in darkness, no sound of life within it. On a table in the little hall was an oil lamp, which the woman lit and then took him into the sitting room. It was plainly but comfortably furnished. A coal fire was laid in the grate. This she

lit, too, and bade him sit down and rest beside it while she got him a hot drink. This took some time owing to the kitchen fire being nearly out.

"While he was drinking he studied the woman. She seemed to be about the age he had first thought her to be, possibly a trifle older. She had a slightly oval face, a pink-and-white complexion, delicate little features, and slanting eyebrows which were many shades darker than her fair hair. Her eyes startled him, for they were dark, almond-shaped, and incongruous—not in keeping with the rest of the face. She was not beautiful, not even what would be styled pretty, but there was something about her that attracted him, and the attraction intensified the more he studied her.

"He told her about the giggling, and she said she had often heard it and was so used to it that it no longer startled her. The Shrubbery was well known to be haunted.

"They sat and chatted for a long time and when at last he rose to go it was nearly daybreak. She escorted him to the garden gate, and when they were in about the middle of the shrubbery he again heard the tittering. As before he glanced quickly around him. Not a living thing was in sight. There was no one in the shrubbery but himself and the blonde woman by his side. And it could not have been she.

"She told him her name was Ysolde Hairens and invited him to supper with her one evening the following week. He made a memorandum of the day and hour on an envelope which he had in one of his pockets.

"During the next few days he was so hard at work transacting the business which had called him to that part of the country that he had little time to think of anything else, and it was not until the beginning of the following week that he recollected he was dated to have supper one evening with Ysolde Hairens. He searched for the envelope on which he had written the day, but could not find it. He felt sure the invitation was for Wednesday or Thursday, and decided in favor of the former.

"It was a lovely evening and he enjoyed the walk along the quiet country road, inhaling deep breaths of air fragrant with the scent of clover and newmown hay. He hated having to return to London in a week's time and wished to goodness that his business transactions would detain him longer in Gloucestershire.

"He was thrilled at the thought of meeting Ysolde Hairens again and anticipated spending a thoroughly enjoyable evening with her. There was something extraordinarily magnetic about her, something binding, something that drew him irresistibly to her. That oval face, those red lips, those slanting eyebrows, that yellow hair, those dark, sparkling, almond-shaped eyes, so incongruous in a face otherwise so English. If she was not actually beautiful, she was something better, she was infinitely fascinating. She filled him with a longing no other woman had ever done or could ever do.

"The more he thought of her the faster he walked. Every yard seemed a mile. Was there ever such a mad desire to see a woman? He tore past trees and fields, patches of waste ground and wayside stagnant pools, uphill and downhill, and never abated his speed until he reached the green gate of The Shrubbery.

"He half expected to see her standing there waiting for him, but not a living soul was in sight. Everywhere was very still. A swarm of gnats was flitting about in the air, usually an augury of fine weather on the morrow, and a big toad moved slowly out of his way as he opened the gate.

"A hair or something else tickled his nose and made him sneeze. He drew out his handkerchief to wipe his nose and a crumpled envelope fell to the ground. He picked it up. It was the missing envelope, and he looked at the date he had written on it. Thursday! He had come the wrong day. Should he go back? No, he had come a long distance. He did not want any supper. He would apologize and stay. Anything to be with her, if she would only let him.

"His pulses quickened as he walked along the laurel path, expecting momentarily to hear the ghostly giggling. He felt that what Ysolde had said about the shrubbery was true, as he sensed very acutely aggressive supernatural presences all around him. The front door of the house was open a little, and as he approached it he heard tittering. Yielding to curiosity, he pushed the door wider open and peered cautiously inside.

"The door of a room opposite him was wide open, and standing in front of a dressing table mirror was a figure in a loose flowing garment. The back of the figure resembled the back of Ysolde Hairens, but the face reflected in the mirror was not human. It was that of a monstrosity. The skin was yellow and covered with long pimples and black bristles. There did not seem to be a nose, only a horrible cavity. The mouth was a gaping, shapeless slit revealing hoglike tusks. The head was quite bald. The thing was leering at its reflection in the glass and tittering.

"On the dressing table was a blonde wig, and in one of the hands of the monstrosity was the mask that Gill had found so magnetically attractive.

"The tittering stopped directly the thing's eyes caught sight of Gill's horrified face in the glass. It swung around and snarled like a wild beast, dropping the mask and rushing at Gill, who was too shocked to stir and attempt to defend himself. Springing on him with the strength and agility of a leopard, the hideous thing dashed him to the ground. His head collided with something very hard and he became unconscious. It was some minutes after he had regained consciousness before he recollected what had happened.

"When he staggered to his feet and looked around him, he was amazed to find himself no longer in a habitable house but in a building that was devoid of furniture and in a ruinous condition—bare, moldy walls and ceiling, broken flooring, rusty ironwork—everywhere signs of decay and long abandonment, everywhere eerie silence.

"As soon as he could pull himself together sufficiently, Gill

lost no time in getting out of the house, down the laurel path, now overgrown with weeds and brambles, and out into the moonlit empty road."

This was the story that Gill told Dr. Rudd, and he did not live long after his admittance to the private mental home.

Rudd, who was interested in Gill's tale, made exhaustive inquiries as to there ever having been a reputed haunted ruin in Gloucestershire which corresponded in any way to Gill's description of The Shrubbery. No one he asked had ever heard of such a place.

He still thought, however, that, fantastic as Gill's story seemed to be, there might at least be an element of truth in it, and for this reason: the undertaker who buried Gill said that when his men were in the room in which Gill died and were about to carry his corpse to the hearse, they heard close beside them an eerie tittering, which startled them to such a degree that they nearly dropped the coffin.

The Ghosts of Whittlebury Forest

ONE WARM SUMMER toward the end of the last century Lance Bright, partner of the firm of Bright, Jones and Simkins, took the ten o'clock morning train from Euston to Northampton. On arriving there he cycled to Belling Grange, an old mansion in the Whittlewood district, which had been unoccupied for a long time and was for sale.

It stood some distance from the road and was approached by a winding drive, lined on either side by great trees. Built some time in the eighteenth century, it was overgrown with ivy and looked haunted, and its interior deepened that impression—a large, echoing hall, a broad oak staircase leading to shadow-laden corridors and rooms, awful in their sense of loneliness and desolation, dark cupboards and nooks and corners suggestive of lurking ghostly horrors.

Bright was not a nervous man, but he experienced a feeling of intense relief when he had done all that was necessary and stepped out into the open, closing the massive weather-beaten front door behind him with a loud, reverberating bang.

He had yet to visit the lodge which, like the house, had long been unoccupied. It did not take him many minutes to get over to it and note its condition, which was very bad, and when he had finished doing this, feeling very tired, he sat on the little staircase which led to the upper story. It was very close and the oppressive heat made him drowsy, so that presently he dozed.

Something roused him. He opened his eyes and stared in amazement, hardly believing his senses. He was no longer sitting on the staircase but on a heaped-up pile of withered leaves

in a forest glade. All around were trees with long branches, like skinny arms and hands, which they shook menacingly at him. Hideous, fiendish faces peered at him from behind the trees and in all sorts of strange places. The sun no longer shone but in its stead a kind of ghostly twilight illuminated the scene. The unearthly silence that reigned around was broken every now and then by spine-chilling shrieks and diabolical laughter that appalled Bright.

All was suddenly hushed. There was a tenseness in the atmosphere, a general sense of acute expectation, shared alike by trees, evil spirits, everything. Bright experienced the strange emotion which so often presages the advent of some particularly awesome happening. He felt an icy current of air and was conscious of a number of things that he could neither see nor hear whirling across the open space in front of him. He had the impression they were horses. Directly they had gone there were peals of mocking laughter, the forest and everything in it vanished, and he found himself seated once again on the lodge staircase.

It was thundering. He waited till the storm was over and then cycled to Northampton, where he caught a train to London. During his journey home he kept thinking of his strange experience, which sorely puzzled him.

His legal work kept him so fully employed that it was some days before he could search for any information regarding the history of the neighborhood of Whittlewood. From an old book dealing with the folklore of the Midland counties of England he learned that the district of Whittlewood was at one time Whittlebury Forest, and that it was rich in legends and traditional stories of ghosts.

According to one story it was haunted by a solitary headless horseman, whose appearance invariably presaged the death of whoever saw him. According to another equally ancient tradition, the forest was haunted nightly by the phantom of a lovely girl mounted on a white horse, who was pursued by yelling fiends on fiery steeds, headed by a spectral green-clad forest

ranger on a coal-black horse. The phantom girl was supposed to be the ghost of a titled lady who, for her heartless treatment of one of her lovers and her many cruel acts, was doomed to haunt Whittlebury Forest till doomsday, ever pursued by the spirit of the youth she had wronged and demon huntsmen and hounds.

Lance Bright wondered if there might not be some truth in this traditional ghost story, if the site of old Whittlebury Forest might not be haunted in some such manner. His strange experience at the lodge had been extremely realistic—not like a dream. He was not paranoiac, had never been subject to hallucinations, and had never believed in ghosts. Yet there did not seem to be any satisfactory explanation for that experience excepting the supernatural.

The Screaming Phantom of Mannheim Forest

Mr. Lee, a Pennsylvanian merchant, had been transacting some business in Mannheim and was on his way to a friend's house in a distant town, when there was a vivid flash of lightning, followed almost at once by a terrific burst of thunder. Ahead of him was a great forest. Having heard of the danger that may be incurred in sheltering under trees during a thunderstorm, he was reluctant to enter the forest but, the only alternative being to go by a longer route through a bleak, open countryside exposed to the full fury of the storm, he decided to push straight ahead.

Urging his horse forward he plunged into the wood and proceeded as fast as the narrow, sinuous track permitted. The forest was very extensive, and he had not gone far before the rain descended in torrents and it became so dark that he was forced to halt. He had remained stationary for probably about half an hour when the storm abated, and the moon shone so brightly that he was able to continue on his journey.

The stillness which succeeded the thunder and heavy downpour of rain was rendered all the more impressive by the contrast. It seemed unnatural, and was broken every now and then by the rustling of leaves that resembled the stealthy whisperings of lurking, watching, eerie denizens of the wood. The cracking of a twig and the sight of a tree whitened by a beam of moonlight made the merchant's horse start. The moonlight certainly had a strange effect. Its passage through the foliage only served to accentuate the surrounding darkness, which the mind of the

weary rider peopled with unfamiliar shapes, menacing, uncanny and perturbingly fantastic. There were occasionally sounds without a name and without a recognizable cause, and which for those reasons were all the more alarming.

The nervousness of the horse, which kept on starting, was infectious, and he hardly dared to look around him lest he should see something terrifying.

A hoarse, unearthly scream suddenly broke the pervading silence. His horse stopped so abruptly that he was pitched from his saddle and landed on the ground. The scream was repeated, and in a half-dazed state he felt something dart past him. He got the impression of a tall, weird figure in rags, with long, disheveled hair. It was gone far too quickly for him to see it at all distinctly. His horse was standing close to him and seemed to have recovered its composure, and he experienced no difficulty in remounting it. He did not stop again until he reached his destination.

The following day he related his unpleasant experience to his friend, and was told that the forest was well known to be haunted by a screaming ghost and was generally avoided at night on that account.

About twenty years previously the mental asylum at Mannheim had contained a female patient who was known by the name of Martha. She had been brought there by a man who declared he was her husband. He assured the director of the institution, with an appearance of the deepest sorrow, that she was very refractory and needed severe disciplining. It was in the days when lunatics were often treated with great cruelty.

Martha was put in one of the strongest cells and subjected to constant beating at the hands of brutal, merciless keepers. Her piercing shrieks could be heard by people outside the institution.

She was found dead one day in the forest in which Mr. Lee had had such a harrowing experience. Her throat had been cut, and close beside her body was a bloodstained piece of jagged iron. The asylum authorities suggested she had committed sui-

cide, but they were unable to explain how she had escaped from her cell. It was generally believed that she had been murdered by one of the keepers, who had deposited her body on the spot where it had subsequently been found.

Soon after her death the asylum was haunted by her ghost. Spine-chilling screams awoke the inmates at night, and her pale, bloodless face was seen pressed against several of the windows. The haunting continued at the asylum for some weeks, and was then transferred to the forest in which her body had been found. People endowed with the faculties of clairaudience and clairvoyance not only saw poor Martha's ghost hovering round the spot but heard her screams, which were recognizable by their peculiar bloodcurdling hoarseness.

Cromarty Ghosts

In the neighborhood of Cromarty Firth there are a moor and a wood which, according to Hugh Miller,[1] were once reputed to be very badly haunted.

The moor is sprinkled over with fir trees and cairns covering the skeletons of the long dead. Under one of them the bones of a gigantic man was found about one hundred years ago. His ghost was believed to be among the host of grisly phantoms which on nights when the wind roared and whistled and the waves dashed against the rugged Cromarty coast, rode madly round and round the moor, in and out the trees and cairns, yelling, cursing, and laughing hilariously.

Many were the stories told of ghostly and ghastly happenings in the wood that adjoined the moor; stories of phantom mail-clad knights engaged in mortal combat; of hideous spectral hags chuckling with diabolical glee as they robbed and mutilated dead and wounded warriors; and of lovely golden-haired, blue-eyed glaistigs that lured men into pools and morasses and mocked and beat them when they tried to extricate themselves.

A Cromarty fisherman was returning one day from Inverness by a road which for several miles skirted the upper edge of the moor and passed within a few yards of the cairn of the gigantic man. Night overtook him before he had half completed his journey and it became so dark that for some time he could hardly see his way.

Just as he reached the wood the moon, nearly at full, rose

[1] See *Scenes and Legends of the North of Scotland.*

over the distant hills and illuminated the surrounding country. Shadowy forms, like nothing he had ever seen, emerged from the trees and glided noiselessly ahead of him. Some of them were so strange and sinister that he was terrified, and it took all his courage to proceed.

Until he was well on the moor the stillness which had hitherto been broken occasionally by the distant lowing of cattle and the bark of a shepherd's dog was now interrupted by only his own footsteps. He had an eerie feeling that he was being persistently followed by some of the frightening things from the wood, and his heart almost jumped out of his mouth when a clammy hand or paw touched his face.

As he approached the cairn of the gigantic man he heard to his amazement sounds like waves breaking on a pebbly beach: the nearest shore was three miles distant. Suddenly, instead of the brown moor with here and there a fir tree, he was terrified to see a wide tempestuous sea, black as ink, stretching before him. Tossed about by the mountainous waves that threatened every moment to overwhelm it was a fishing boat containing several men. The moon, struggling through a dense mass of stormcloud, threw broad streams of light on the foaming billows, and illuminated the white faces of the men in the boat.

The fisherman, who was watching the scene with the greatest horror, recognized them; they were all, like himself, Cromarty fishermen, and one of them was his brother. A huge wave suddenly rose high over the boat and engulfed it. The Cromarty fisherman was so shocked that he swooned.

When he recovered consciousness and gazed around him there was once again only the fir tree and cairn-sprinkled moorland. No sign of the sea anywhere.

The following day there was a sudden squall in Cromarty Bay, and among the boats that were lost was the one containing the men whom the Cromarty fisherman had seen in his vision on the haunted cairn-sprinkled moor.

The Haunted Copse

FEW FAMILIES can have been more interested in ghostly phenomena than my mother's family. Elizabeth Fowke, who married my great-grandfather, Thomas Chapman Harrison, always ascribed her interest in the supernatural to Charlemagne, the hero of so many legends, from whom, according to John Nichols, the historian of Leicestershire, she was descended. My family notebook contains quite a number of ghostly experiences of Elizabeth Fowke and her relatives and friends. The following is one of them:

It occurred when Elizabeth was staying with her friends, the Lees, at their house, The Gables, in Leicestershire.

Living alone in a cottage on the outskirts of Delling, the village nearest to The Gables, was a man named Reuben Beale, who bore a very ill reputation in the neighborhood. He was a short, thickset, black-bearded, low-browed and sinister man whom few people would care to meet at night on a lonely country road. He had been convicted more than once of poaching, and was suspected of having murdered a keeper. The murder had taken place in the grounds of the Austins, who were great friends of the Lees. Their house was midway between Beale's cottage and The Gables.

Ronald Austin, Elizabeth Fowke, and Grace and Evangeline Lee went one afternoon to a garden party at Delling vicarage. As it was only a short distance they walked, and enjoyed themselves so much at the party that it was evening when they left the vicarage. It was a lovely September evening and they did not hurry, but strolled leisurely along chattering and laughing.

The countryside was thinly populated in those days and, with the exception of Beale's cottage, there were no human habitations between Delling and the Austins, a distance of about a mile and a half. Even in the daytime there was little traffic and at night there was rarely anything beyond a private carriage or two.

The road stretched in a long white line before the merry young people; the dark shadows of the trees which bordered it lay clearly defined, and scarcely a breath of wind stirred the branches. The only sounds that broke the prevailing quiet were the voices and laughter of the walkers.

They had not long passed Beale's cottage and were approaching a dense copse on one side of the road when a half-naked man burst out of it and rushed toward them. His face, ghastly white in the moonlight, was convulsed with terror. It was Beale, but there was something perturbingly unreal about him. Close at his heels was a tall, dark thing, too shadowy to give any definite idea of its shape, but it was unmistakably evil.

Without a glance at Elizabeth and her companions Beale tore past them. Too terrified to stir or speak, they stood and watched Beale and the sinister thing that was pursuing him tear to his cottage and disappear within it. For a few moments there was silence and then a dreadful shriek.

The spell that held them broken, Elizabeth and her friends hurried homeward.

The next morning they heard that Reuben Beale's dead body had been found in the copse. He had hanged himself.

The Phantom Forest

Con Fernaghan, a man I met when I was a student in Dublin, told me an eerie experience he once had in a Connaught wood. It happened one autumn in the 1860's.

He was very fond of walking and was journeying on foot from his home in West Meath to his uncle's house in Clare. He stopped once or twice at inns, and at one the landlady, half in jest and half seriously, warned him to be on the lookout for eerie happenings on Hallowe'en.

It was late in the afternoon of the last day in October when he arrived at a wooded hollow. There was something about it that inspired him with such a feeling of dread that he hesitated before entering it. He remembered what the landlady had said about Hallowe'en. Strange things were said to take place that night.

The hollow in front of him looked as if it might well be haunted. Dare he proceed? He took a drop of the poteen he had bought at an inn to fortify himself and then plunged into the wood.

A pale, ghastly light coming from he knew not where illuminated the track ahead of him. There was not a sound; no hooting of owls, no fluttering of wings, no rustling of leaves: nothing to interrupt the all-prevailing hush.

The trees were not ordinary trees; he had never seen their like before. Tall and sleek and slender, they waved their long, snakelike arms menacingly above his head. He felt hidden eyes watching him on all sides, and he started when a dog poked its head out of a bush just in front of him. There was the expres-

sion of an evil human being in its eyes as they met his gaze. It leered at him, and vanished.

A big black hare leaped on to the path, gave him a look expressive of strong disgust, and bounded out of sight. A Siamese cat dropped from a tree to the ground, eyed him with supreme contempt, and stalked haughtily away. Numerous other animals, all with something markedly human in their faces, popped out from behind a tree or bush, stared disapprovingly and menacingly at him, and disappeared. None of them made a sound.

He was feeling that he must be nearing the end of the forest when a bend in the path revealed a glade, in the center of which a desperate struggle was taking place between a lovely hind and a ferocious black ram. There was something horribly evil about the ram: it was satanic. Fernaghan was appalled, yet so enthralled that he had to stop and watch the fight.

It was too unequal to last long. The furious butting of the ram overcame the hind's power of resistance. Beaten to her knees, she cast an appealing glance at Fernaghan. There was something so intensely human in her eyes which, unlike the usual eyes of deer, were blue not brown, that Fernaghan, his sense of chivalry stirred to the utmost, sprang to her assistance.

He had no weapon other than his walking stick.

Throwing himself between the hind and her assailant, he struck at the latter with all his might, just as it was preparing to charge. His stick encountered nothing solid. The ram butted him savagely. He felt an acute pain, and knew no more. When he recovered consciousness he was lying in a bare hollow. There was no sign of a wood or of a tree. Not knowing what to make of it, whether he had been dreaming, or had really had a Hallowe'en phantasm, he rose with some difficulty from the ground, feeling very sore and stiff, and continued on his way to his uncle.

He related his strange adventure to his uncle, who made inquiries in the district in which he had experienced it, and was

informed by several of the old inhabitants that they remembered hearing in their youth about a phantom forest that had been seen at times on the eves of Midsummer and All Hallows.

This was the story which Fernaghan told me. He declared that it was true and insisted on showing me scars which he said had been made by the black ram.

Time had never effaced them.

The Haunted Tree in Hyde Park

An experience I once had in Hyde Park can, I think, be explained only by the theory that ghosts can connive at, and actually bring about, accidents and disasters. (Please note that this experience occurred when the regulations concerning the park were nothing like as rigid as they are now, and tramps lay hidden under the trees and bushes there all night.)

Well, one evening, being filled with the desire to get copy for a work I was contemplating writing, I turned into Hyde Park by way of Marble Arch, and wandered down one of the paths in the direction of Lancaster Gate. Presently I came to a seat on which a trampish-looking figure, a mere bundle of rags, sat, all huddled up in a heap.

Planting myself down alongside of him, I remarked upon its being a fine night, and offered him some tobacco. There was no reply; he either didn't or wouldn't hear me. However, on my repeating the offer in a louder tone, he raised his head, and revealed a face so thin and bloodless and altogether corpselike, that I was startled.

"It's not tobacco I want," he said, speaking in quite a cultured voice, "it's food. I haven't had a mouthful of anything for the last two days, and I'm about done."

I had some sandwiches with me and a flask of sherry. I handed both to him, and when he had finished eating and drinking, which was not until the last sandwich had gone and every drop of the sherry had been drained, he grew communicative.

At first he spoke only of his early life. He had been educated at a large public school and had gone to Oxford with an exhibi-

tion, and in the full expectation of achieving brilliant academical successes. And so, for a time, he did; but unfortunately it was not long before he got into a fast set, and that was the beginning of the end. He took to drink, was sent down from the university, packed off to the colonies, where the drink habit still clung to him and always prevented him keeping a job long, and eventually, working his passage back to England, he gradually drifted on to the road, and became a habitual tramp.

"In all your adventures," I inquired, "have you ever come up against the unknown, or, in other words, have you ever had any experiences with the supernatural?"

"Yes," he replied, "and in this park, too."

He then told me an extraordinary tale, which I will now quote, as nearly as possible, word for word.

"I was wandering about the park one night," he began, "looking for some spot where I could lie down, without being seen by any of the keepers or police. For some time I met with no success, but at last I espied a tree, away from the path and occupying a very isolated position. It was a singular-looking tree, inasmuch as it had, growing almost horizontally from its trunk, one long branch that strikingly resembled a very long human arm, with a hand outstretched and all the fingers widespread and curved, as if in the act of clutching hold of someone. Still, as its foliage was thick and there was a depression or hollow in the ground exactly beneath it, I fancied it was just the place I was in search of. When one has no nightclothes of any description, no sheets and no blankets, it does not take one long to get into bed, and in a few seconds I was lying in the hollow, with my coat and trousers pulled tightly around me, trying to imagine myself warm. Fortunately the night was not cold and, being very tired, I was soon asleep, and, for a wonder, sound asleep.

"At first all was a blank, and then suddenly I dreamed. I fancied the long, grotesquely fashioned, horizontal branch imme-

diately above me turned into an actual living arm and hand, and began slowly to descend, the fingers all widespread, ready to grip hold of me. I was at once seized with an awful horror, but found myself, as one so often does in dreams, utterly unable to do anything. I couldn't move a limb or even a muscle.

"In this helpless condition I was forced to watch the arm descend lower and lower, until the great hand hovered just above my face, and the tips of the long and cruel-looking fingers all but grazed my flesh. A voice then said, in soft but decidedly menacing tones, 'I have got you now and I mean to keep you, always, always, always—there is no escape.'

"The next moment the fingers, soft as satin, closed over my mouth and throat and began to throttle me. I awoke shrieking and in such terror that I jumped up and sought a bed elsewhere."

Here my informant paused.

I handed him a cigarette, and after he had lighted it, he went on again.

"Well," he remarked, "that dream made a great impression on me, I could not get it out of my head. I kept seeing, in my mind's eye, that long, supple arm and those cruel-looking, curved fingers, and I felt curiously fascinated by them, so much so that I again visited the spot and went to sleep there. With exactly the same result. I should have gone there a third time, for the fascination had now grown into a kind of morbid craving—a craving that was most extraordinary, because while I dreamed, I was so horribly frightened—had not a man I knew met me, as I was making my way toward it, and stopped me. 'Whatever you do, George,' he said, 'don't sleep under that tree. There's something plaguy unlucky about it. I can assure you this is a fact because several people, after spending a night under it, have committed suicide on the spot immediately afterward. Come with me and we will try somewhere else.'

"Well, feeling certain from my own experience that all he

said about the tree was true, I acquiesced, and I have never slept beneath it since, although, at times, the temptation to do so has been very great."

"Then you believe it is haunted!" I observed.

"Yes," he said, "I do. I believe a something forms there at nighttime, a vampirish something that hates human beings, at all events men, and thirsts to destroy them, body and soul."

"Will you show me the tree?" I said, offering him another cigarette. He nodded, and getting slowly on his feet, struck off down a side path that was almost opposite the spot where we had been sitting. After walking along it for some minutes we took to the grass, and eventually came within sight of a tree that I at once identified as the tree he had described. It was quite isolated, standing all alone in the middle of a wide open space, and the pale, moonlit sky in the background threw it—especially the long, arm-shaped branch—into strong relief.

"I'll stay under it for a while," I said, "and see if anything happens."

"I wouldn't if I were you," the tramp rejoined. "All I have told you is absolutely true—the tree is haunted, and haunted badly."

"Well, I'll put it to the test," I said, "but don't you stay here. Go and get a night's decent sleep and perhaps we shall meet again sometime. What's your name?"

"George Howell," he replied, "and if ever you want me you'll most probably find me—unless times change and my ship comes in—sitting on that bench where you met me tonight. We park folk," he continued, somewhat facetiously, "are very conservative; we fight shy of change, even though it might, perhaps, be to our advantage to do otherwise."

I gave him a couple of shillings, practically all I had on me at the time, and after thanking me again he left me, padding his way softly over the turf. I walked straight to the tree and, leaning against the trunk, waited. As the minutes sped by, I grew very weary standing, and at one o'clock I began to think of

home and bed. However, just as I was about to depart, I was seized with a certain sure feeling that I was no longer alone. I was, in fact, acutely conscious of some presence that, from close by, was watching me intently. I looked around, but there was nothing to be seen, only the moonlight and the black shadow of the tree. From afar off came the whistling of a train and the jangle jingle of hansom cab bells, otherwise everything was wonderfully still. All the same, the feeling I have specified continued, and at length became so unbearable that I left the spot, and made my way out of the park to my lodgings, as quickly as I could.

I saw George Howell again, some months later. He was seated on the same bench, and pretty well in the same attitude; but he was not alone. He had a woman companion, and the impression I received of her was that she might once—in the days of long ago—have been pretty. They were sitting very close to one another, whether for the sake of material warmth, or from the warmth of affection, I did not know.

"Well, Mr. Howell," I exclaimed, dropping on the bench beside them, "how about that tree? I suppose you haven't slept there again?"

"Hello!" he croaked, his cultured voice as hoarse as any crow's. "Is that you? You are a stranger. No, I haven't slept there since I saw you, though I've often wanted to. A fellow was found dead under the tree only a night or two ago." And turning to his companion, he concluded, "It keeps up its reputation, doesn't it, Minnie?"

"There's something queer about it," Minnie replied, in tones that plainly showed she did not belong to the same class as her friend. "A pal of mine spent a night under it once, but never no more. She told me afterward she never 'ad such dreadful nightmares in 'er life. She kept dreamin' somethin' was comin' down from the tree to strangle 'er. And she said it was all so real like that it made 'er sweat all over. I wouldn't sleep there—under that tree—not for a fiver."

"I would," George Howell grunted. "I'd sleep under it for nothing."

"Then you'd just 'ave to alone," Minnie snapped, "so shut up."

The subject, I could see, was a sore one, so I changed it, and after talking to them for a little while, I gave them each a shilling and came away.

Several weeks must have passed by without my seeing either of them again. Then, fate directed my steps once more to the same spot, and I discovered Minnie sitting on the bench alone.

"Well," I said, taking a seat beside her, "where is Mr. Howell?"

"Oh, it's you, is it?" she exclaimed, turning a very white face toward me. "The gent that spoke to George and me out 'ere, several weeks ago. You were very good to George, weren't you? 'E often talked about you."

"I don't know about being very good," I rejoined. "I merely did what I could for him, but I am afraid that wasn't much! Where is he?"

"Dead."

"Dead!" I echoed. "When did he die?"

"A few days after you saw us," the woman replied. "You remember talkin' about that tree! Well, George 'Owell was just crazy about it, and after you 'ad gone, I couldn't get him to talk of anything else. 'I must and will sleep under it,' 'e kept sayin'; and try 'ow I would, I couldn't stop 'im. 'E left me 'ere all by myself—I wouldn't go with 'im—and slept there. 'Well,' I remarked, when I met 'im the next night, 'did anything 'appen?' 'Yes,' 'e said. 'I 'ad that dream again. You know what I mean. That dream about the branch. I dreamed it descended and begun to choke me with its velvety hands. I was 'orribly, 'ideously scared. I am, still.'

" 'Then you won't go there again,' I said.

" 'I don't know,' 'e replied. 'It fascinates me.'

"'E went there again that night, though I did my best to prevent 'im, and in the mornin' 'e was found dead."

"What did he die of?" I asked. "Do you know?"

"Yes," she answered slowly. "One of the keepers told me. 'E was strangled, strangled with is suspenders, and they said it was suicide."

"Well, what else could it have been?" I observed. "Not murder!"

"No, not exactly murder," she replied. "But I don't believe 'e died of 'is own accord. I believe that tree is 'aunted and there's something there at nights as tempts people, who is what yer might call 'ighly strung, and sensitive, like George 'Owell was, to put an end to theirselves. It oughter be cut down."

And it was, for when I went to look for it some time afterward, it was gone; and to me, at least, the spot, where it had stood, seemed all the purer and sweeter for its absence.

PART IV

Ghosts and Other Things

The Amorous Ghost of Hove

After one of my talks in London last year Mrs. Edward Ball of Richmond told me the following experience which she had a few years ago in Hove.

She was staying one July in an apartment house near the sea front. Happening to look out of her sitting room window at about eleven o'clock one sunny morning, she saw a rather stout, elderly gentleman approach the house. He had a round, rubicund face and wore a white flower in the buttonhole of his fashionable coat. He saw her and smiled in the most friendly manner.

She heard the front door open and someone enter the house. A few moments later the door of her room opened, and the elderly gentleman poked his head in and smiled and nodded. She was about to speak when she heard voices in the hall, and he quickly withdrew and closed the door. She thought it rather odd but supposed he had mistaken her for someone else.

The next day about three o'clock in the afternoon she was going up the hall staircase to her bedroom on the next floor when she heard footsteps behind her and, on glancing around, saw the elderly gentleman a few stairs in her rear.

He still wore a white flower in his buttonhole and, to her indignation, smiled amorously at her. She was about to say, "How dare you follow me!" when someone on the landing spoke to her. It was Mrs. Ward, a lady who was staying in the house. She turned to speak to Mrs. Ward, and when, on reaching the landing, she looked to see if the rubicund old gentleman was still pursuing her, there was no sign of him.

She did not see him again for several days, and was congratulating herself on having got rid of him, when he again put in an appearance. She had been out shopping one morning, and on returning to the house and entering the sitting room she saw to her great surprise the amorous old man calmly sitting in an armchair. His bulging blue eyes gleamed passionately and he pushed a pudgy hand at her.

She went in a fury to Mrs. Smith, the landlady, complained vehemently about the old man, and told her to order him out of her room or she would leave at once. Looking very pale and agitated, Mrs. Smith went to the sitting room and in a few moments returned.

"There's no one there," she said. "I have a strange tale to tell you, Mrs. Ball. This house is my livelihood. I have very little private means, and before I begin my story will you promise to regard what I have to say as strictly confidential?"

Mrs. Ball promised.

"Five years ago," Mrs. Smith began, "Mr. Price, the old gentleman you have described, took two rooms. He seemed a very nice gentleman, he gave no trouble, was very free with his money, and a general favorite with visitors and servants. I hoped he would stay with me a long time. When he had been here about a month your rooms were taken by a very smart, attractive young widow. Three days after her arrival she came to me and said, 'Mrs. Smith, will you please tell that awful old man on the floor above me to stop coming into my room and following me about the house.'

"I spoke to Mr. Price. He admitted he had been greatly attracted by the young woman, but promised not to pester her again. He did not keep his word, with the result that the charming widow left.

"He subsequently caused so much trouble by annoying my lady lodgers that I could not have him in the house any longer. He was very angry with me and declared that when he died he would haunt this house for as long as I was in it. His threat did

not worry me in the least, for I did not *then* believe in ghosts."

Mrs. Ball stared incredulously at her. "You don't mean to say that you believe in ghosts now?"

Mrs. Smith nodded. "I do. The old man died in hospital a year after he left me, and this time he kept his word. You are not the first person who has seen him here."

Mrs. Ball laughed. "You are not trying to tell me that the horrid old man who has been pestering me is a ghost? It's ridiculous!"

"It is nevertheless true," Mrs. Smith said. "If you see him again throw something at him and watch what happens. He probably will appear again, for ladies with lovely red hair like yours, Mrs. Ball, have a particularly strong attraction for him; he can never keep away from them."

Mrs. Smith spoke with apparent sincerity, but Mrs. Ball found it impossible to believe that the stout, rubicund old man with what certainly looked like a real white flower in his buttonhole was a ghost. She decided to stay in the house a few days longer, and if she saw him again to follow Mrs. Smith's counsel and throw something at him.

The next day, about eleven o'clock in the morning, she went to her bedroom to fetch something. She was about to enter the room, when the door of the large wardrobe facing her suddenly opened and the rubicund face of the amorous old man peered out of it at her. She was so startled that she sprang back, shut the door with a bang and called to Mrs. Smith, who happened to be in a room on that floor.

"He's in my room," Mrs. Ball cried, "hiding in the wardrobe."

Mrs. Smith went into the room at once and searched everywhere. There was no sign of the old man. The sole window was only open a few inches at the top as it was a very windy day, and there was no other exit except the door. To get past Mrs. Ball without being seen would have been impossible, as she was close to the door.

"Are you convinced now?" Mrs. Smith asked. "Do you still think the old gentleman is a thing of flesh and blood and not a ghost?"

Mrs. Ball was obviously shaken. "I don't know what to think," she said. "I only know one thing. I can't stay another hour in this house." And she packed up her things and left.

She heard that within a year after she had gone Mrs. Smith sold the house and went to Worthing, her native town. As the amorous old beau had threatened to haunt the Hove house only for as long as Mrs. Smith lived in it, one can presume the haunting by his unwelcome ghost ceased when she moved elsewhere.

The Room of the Lingering Thoughts

I AM INDEBTED to Mr. John Harrison, a reader of my books, for the following strange story.

Mr. Harrison, who was in business in London, feeling badly in need of a holiday, decided to spend a long weekend in Bournemouth. Although it was early autumn Bournemouth was very full of visitors, and he had difficulty in getting accommodation. He finally secured a room in a small hotel not far from West Bournemouth.

The lovely air proved a wonderful tonic, gave him a huge appetite, and for the first two nights he slept like a top. He went to bed about eleven o'clock the third night of his visit. He had been to the pavilion and, not feeling sleepy, he sat and read until one o'clock. He had not been in bed more than a few minutes and was wide awake, when the door opened and two men entered the room.

"This is Dr. Black, Mr. Dunn," the shorter of the two men said, addressing Harrison. "He is going to perform the operation."

Harrison wanted to tell him he was not Mr. Dunn and that he was not in need of an operation, but something outside himself compelled him to say: "I shall be quite ready, Doctor. When is the operation?"

"I will tell you when I've examined you," Dr. Black said. He then proceeded to examine Harrison's stomach. He prodded and rubbed it. "It's just here," he said. "I can feel it swelling up." He conversed in low tones with the doctor and then, turning to Harrison, said: "The operation will be at nine o'clock on

Monday morning." He and the other doctor then left the room.

After they had gone Harrison remained undisturbed, except by his thoughts, which were chaotic, for he did not know how long—it might have been hours or even days. He had quite lost cognizance of time.

Suddenly the door of his room opened and two nurses entered, pushing what appeared to be a movable bed.

"Good morning, Mr. Dunn," one of them said. "How are you feeling?"

"Quite all right," Harrison said. "What is supposed to be the matter with me?"

"You had better ask Dr. Black," the nurse replied. "I'm going to give you an injection."

It was on the tip of his tongue to expostulate, but words would not come, and he suffered the nurse to prick him with her needle without remonstrance. They then lifted him onto the movable bed and pushed him along a corridor and into a room.

He did not think it was the actual operating theater. High above him was a very ordinary electric light, and on either side of him a white-clad figure. One, the lower part of whose face was swathed in white, he thought was a man, the other might have been a man or woman. He was wondering what they were going to do to him when he found himself in bed, tightly bandaged.

"When does the operation take place?" he asked.

"It's over and finished with," someone replied.

Every time he breathed or attempted to move he endured such excruciating pain that he screamed. A nurse gave him two tablets to swallow. They did not diminish the pain and he begged for more. The nurse shook her head.

"I dare not give you any more," she said. "Try and bear the pain. It will gradually go."

But it did not gradually go; on the contrary it grew worse, and he was wondering how much longer he could endure it

and wishing he were dead, when a current of very cold air fanned his face. He was no longer bandaged; he could breathe and move in comfort. He was conscious of a delicious feeling of relief. He was quite alone in the room. He switched on the light and looked at his watch. It was two o'clock.

He could not sleep, so he sat in an armchair and read until four o'clock, when he felt drowsy for the first time. He got back into bed and slept till he was brought an early cup of tea.

His experience was so extraordinarily real and vivid that he told Mr. Crag, the manager of the hotel, about it. Mr. Crag listened with the greatest interest and said, "I am indeed sorry that you had such a very painful experience. I deeply regret putting you in that room, but it was the only vacant one.

"Three years ago a Mr. Arthur Dunn was staying here when he became so ill—he had not been well for a long time—that he was obliged to undergo a major operation in a London hospital. After the operation he returned here and occupied your room for several weeks. He then went back to London, and died there just a year ago.

"What I am going to say may sound fantastic to you, but I am wondering if your experience might have been due in some measure to the lingering thoughts of Mr. Dunn. I have heard it suggested that strongly emotional thoughts emanating from a living brain may become embedded in the atmosphere, and even walls and furniture in a room. Mr. Dunn on his return here may have been thinking very intensely of his operation in London, he may have gone through it all again in his mind—perhaps many times—and the vivid repetitionary conjuring up of it may have made lasting embedded impressions of it in the room, to be telepathically transmitted to you, who are apparently endowed with the rare faculty for sensing and visualizing such lingering thought emanations.

"I belong to a research society and am extremely interested in theories and suppositions relative to psychic phenomena. What do you think?"

Mr. Harrison, who had never heard of lingering thought emanations and had always been a confirmed materialist, said he did not know what to think but that if he was endowed with such a very unpleasant faculty as Mr. Crag suggested, he might, if he spent another night in the bedroom, have even worse, if possible, telepathically transmitted lingering thought emanations, and not being at all desirous of chancing such a probability, since the one experience he had had was more than enough for him, he would return to London that very day.

The Ghost of the Old Boar's Head Tavern and Other Hauntings

"THE CHURCHYARDS and by-corners of the old City of London are very much infested with perturbed spirits." So wrote Washington Irving in volume No. 1 of the *Sketch Book*.

One of the reputed haunted City buildings in olden days was the Boar's Head Tavern in Eastcheap. It adjoined St. Michael's, Crooked Lane, and was a popular meeting place of sailors and fishmongers.

For many years it had on its staff Robert Preston, a waggish, garrulous old drawer, who was a great favorite with the customers. After his death he was still on occasions drawn to his beloved tavern.

The sexton who was officiating at St. Michael's at the time Washington Irving visited that church, told the author of the *Sketch Book* that on a dark wintry night when the wind was unruly, howling and whistling, banging about doors and windows, twirling weathercocks, so that the living were frightened out of their beds and even the dead could not sleep quietly in their graves, the ghost of honest Preston, which happened to be airing itself in the churchyard, was attracted by the well-known call of "Waiter!" from the Boar's Head and made its sudden appearance in the midst of a roaring club, just as the parish clerk was singing a stave from the "Mirre Garland of Captain Death," to the discomfiture of sundry train-band captains and the conversion of an infidel attorney, who became a zealous Christian

on the spot and was never known to twist the truth afterward, except in the way of business.

In the center of the City of London lies a small neighborhood which was formerly known as Little Britain. Before the mania for pulling down old buildings commenced in grim earnest Little Britain contained many venerable buildings, full of historic interest. Not a few of these aged mansions were reputed to be haunted.

The phantoms of lords and ladies, the former in full-bottomed wigs, hanging sleeves, and swords, the latter in lappets, stays, hoops, and brocade, trod nightly the great waste chambers, the corridors and the broad oak staircases. Ghostly music and the tapping of high-heeled shoes were heard in what were once ballrooms, where the minuet and other stately old-world dances were once danced.

Grey Friars in Newgate Street is still believed to be haunted by the ghost of cruel Isabella, the lovely she-wolf of France, and the Lady Hungerford, who was executed for murder in the sixteenth century.

There are several rumored haunted buildings in and around Piccadilly. The phantoms of a murderer and his victim are said to haunt one house. The odd thing about this haunting is that the murderer is alive.

Another house has a very objectionable ghost that imparts the sensation of strangulation to people who sleep in a certain room. I once sought permission to spend a night in the house, and failed to obtain it. The landlord was very wrath. He vehemently denied there was any truth in the rumors that his house was haunted and threatened to take action against anyone circulating them.

I went one afternoon to a reputed haunted flat in Dover Street. I was sitting in a room in the flat talking to the tenant, when I saw an ornament on a shelf suddenly rise a foot or two in the air, untouched by any visible agency, and fall on to a rug without incurring any damage.

"Does that sort of thing often happen?" I asked the occupant of the flat.

"Oh, yes," he said, "and much more than that. Things disappear mysteriously and reappear just as mysteriously. I sometimes hear footsteps and the rustling of a dress, and once I felt a soft hand on my forehead. That did give me rather a start. I saw nothing, and have never seen the ghost or ghosts, for I have an idea that there is more than one here, but I have got so used to them that they don't trouble me. Apparently they are quite harmless."

I arranged with him to hold a nocturnal vigil in the flat, but unfortunately he was taken suddenly ill and died in a nursing home.

I held a nocturnal vigil with an estate agent friend of mine on the staircase of a house in Bloomsbury, waiting for the ghost that was said to haunt the top flat in the building. The owner of the flat said the ghost was that of a man who always had the lower part of his face covered with a handkerchief. The ghost came softly up the staircase during the night, entered the flat, although the door was locked on the inside, and had the alarming habit of pawing the bedclothes under which the head of the terrified occupant of the flat was hidden. There was no clue regarding the identity of the phantom, but the owner of the flat thought that it might be the ghost of a former tenant, who either murdered someone in the top flat or met with a tragic end in it himself.

The staircase on which I and my companion sat was so drafty that after we had been there for an hour we were about to abandon it for the flat, when we heard footsteps creeping furtively up the stairs. As they drew nearer and nearer the estate agent clutched my arm, and I could feel him shaking. We saw nothing but we both sensed something pass us by and heard the footsteps go right up to the top flat.

We followed them and found the occupant of the flat in bed with his head buried under the clothes. Emboldened by our

presence he sat up, and we stayed with him until the morning. I wanted to spend another night in the house but I did not get an opportunity as the occupant of the flat removed elsewhere very shortly afterward.

One of the worst nights I ever spent in a haunted house was in Museum Street. I was alone on the ground floor and was dozing when something roused me, and wherever I looked I saw pale, glittering eyes watching me. I switched on the electric light and for some seconds I still saw the eyes. They vanished suddenly. I kept the light on until the morning. The house was said to have once harbored an occultist who dabbled in black magic, and the haunting was thought to be due to the evil spirits which he had evoked.

One experience of those dreadful eyes was more than enough for me. I never held another nocturnal vigil in that building.

The Gwrach-Y-Rhíbyn (The Hag of the Dríbble)

Welsh family hauntings are more varied, perhaps, than those of either England or Scotland, and they certainly include phenomena not to be found in either of those countries, as for example the Gwrach-y-rhibyn, or Hag of the Dribble, erroneously said by some authors to resemble the banshee.

The Gwrach-y-rhibyn usually takes the form of a dreadful old hag with long massed hair, a hooked nose, piercing eyes, a crooked back, long arms with clawlike fingers, and scaly black wings. Those who know anything about Irish family hauntings will agree with me that the description I have just given ill accords with that of any genuine banshee. The advent of the Gwrach-y-rhibyn certainly has the same signification as that of the banshee, namely, the approaching death of a member of the family to which she is attached. Like the banshee, too, she has a particular regard for race and only haunts those families in whom there is a genuine strain of old Welsh blood.

The Stradlings, one such really Welsh family, are very much haunted. They were in possession of St. Donat's Castle, near Llantwit, in South Wales, for seven centuries, probably from the time it was built till the middle of the eighteenth century, when there was a very curious lawsuit in regard to it. It appears that, before starting on a continental tour with a friend named Tyrrwhit, the heir to the Stradling estates, young Stradling, signed a kind of contract with Tyrrwhit, to the effect that should either of them die through accident or from any other

cause the other would be entitled to all he, the deceased, had, inclusive of all that he might have inherited. While they were on their tour young Stradling came into possession of the property through the death of his father, and shortly afterward was killed in a duel at Montpelier in France; whereupon young Tyrrwhit at once claimed the property.

The Stradlings, who believed young Stradling was the victim of foul play, disputed the claim, and long years of litigation followed, in which one imagines the lawyers on either side feathered their nests well. Eventually the property passed into the hands of the Tyrrwhits. Later, it was bought by Dr. Carne, a descendant of the Stradlings, who sold it to Mr. Morgan Williams. In 1922 Mr. Pennoyer bought it. While the lawsuit was in process the castle was let, and it was then that stories relating to it and to the ruins of another castle close to Llantwit, known locally as The Old Place, got into circulation. There was a tradition that many years previously a certain very beautiful Lady Stradling had been foully murdered in or near St. Donat's Castle, and it was now said that her ghost had haunted the Stradling family for generations, always appearing either in the castle itself or in the grounds before the death of any of the Stradling family. The villagers living in the vicinity of St. Donat's corroborated these rumors and declared that whenever the ghost of Lady Stradling walked, every dog in the neighborhood began to bark and howl.

The Gwrach-y-rhibyn is another family ghost of the Stradlings, which, like the ghost of Lady Stradling, invariably predicts a death in their family. It is said to have been seen both at St. Donat's and at The Old Place. Before the death of the last Stradling in direct descent, a visitor at St. Donat's was awakened in the night by a moaning and wailing, which sounded immediately beneath his window. He got up and looked out of the window, but could not see anything, owing to the intense darkness. He then heard, in addition to the moaning and wailing, which sounded like a woman in great distress, the flapping

of huge wings and a tapping; the tapping, he thought, of very long fingernails against the windowpanes. There was something so eerie in the sounds that he was frightened and hastened back to bed, taking care, however, to keep a light burning till the morning. His hostess, of whom he inquired if she had heard the strange noises in the night, told him that she had, and that what they had both experienced was the haunting of the Gwrach-y-rhibyn that always occurred at the castle prior to the death of a Stradling; and, sure enough, news was soon received of the death of the last, in direct descent, of that family.

The villagers testified to seeing this ghost at other times, either flying across the lanes and fields in the direction of the castle, or hovering around the moonlit ivy-covered walls of The Old Place.

A Gwrach-y-rhibyn used to haunt the De Clares, when they lived at Caerphilly Castle, near Cardiff; and it is said to have been seen there after the De Clares left and the castle fell into disrepair. Near the ruins is a marshy piece of land, and out of this the Gwrach-y-rhibyn would rise and always make direct for the same spot, the ruined castle. It was believed that her every appearance prognosticated the death of some descendant of the ancient De Clare family.

Among the various families that once owned the old castle, now in ruins, near Cowbridge, on the banks of the River Tawe in Glamorganshire, were the Seisyllts, who lived there prior to the Norman Conquest, and from that time to about the beginning of the thirteenth century; the Bassetts, who then obtained possession of it and occupied it for many years; the Edmunds, who succeeded the Bassetts, and the Treharnes,[1] who were among the last to reside there. According to local tradition, a Gwrach-y-rhibyn haunted some, if not all, of these families, invariably demonstrating after the manner peculiar to that species of phantom. At the beginning of the last century, so I am told, it was seen and heard wailing and moaning amid the castle ruins

[1] Spelt also Treherne.

shortly before the owner of the estate, a lawyer living near by in a more modern edifice, died. It was owing to the intervention of a Gwrach-y-rhibyn, so the story goes, that the aforesaid owner of the old castle property left it to a descendant of the Bassetts, the onetime possessors of it. The Gwrach-y-rhibyn seems to have planned its intervention somewhat curiously. It did not appear to the lawyer but to a workman in the village adjoining the old castle, and to him it said repeatedly, "Give it back to them." The lawyer, however, interpreted the Gwrach-y-rhibyn's words as an admonition to himself to restore the old castle to the Bassett family, and he accordingly did so.

A Gwrach-y-rhibyn also haunted the ruins of Pennard Castle. It was seen there repeatedly about eighty years ago, and was said to be looking for the family that was there originally and which it haunted for long centuries, until, in fact, that family passed out of existence.

A branch of the Barrys of South Wales is haunted by a Gwrach-y-rhibyn that never fails to appear at one of the windows before the death of a member of the family. It taps against the glass with its long nails and utters bloodcurdling screams.

Some Welsh families are haunted by the Cyhyraeth, or Death Sound. It is a wailing or moaning, indescribably sad, that is only heard before a death and seldom, if ever, outside a district, consisting of about twelve villages, to the southeast of the River Towy.

Then there are the Canhywallan Cyrth, or Corpse Candles. They are called candles because their light resembles, in shape, the flame of a candle. Like the Gwrach-y-rhibyn or Hag of the Dribble, these lights are attached to old Welsh families, and only appear before a death. If the lights are small and of a pale blue color, they predict the death of a child; if large and ruddy, the death of an adult in the prime of life; if large and pale blue, or white, the death of an old person who has been long ailing and decrepit.

There are many authentic accounts of the appearances of

these lights; such, for instance, as this, which was published in *Frazer's Magazine*: "In a wild and retired district in North Wales, the following occurrence took place, to the great astonishment of the mountaineers. We can vouch for the truth of this statement, as many members of our *teutu*, or clan, were witnesses of the fact. On a dark evening, a few winters ago, some persons, with whom we are well acquainted, were returning to Barmouth, on the south or opposite side of the river. As they approached the ferry house at Penthryn, which is directly opposite Barmouth, they observed a light near the house, which they conjectured to be produced by a bonfire, and greatly puzzled they were to discover the reason why it should have been lighted. As they came nearer, however, it vanished; and when they inquired at the house respecting it, they were surprised to learn that not only had the people there displayed no light, but they had not even seen one; nor could they perceive any signs of it on the sands.

"On reaching Barmouth, the circumstance was mentioned, and the fact corroborated by some of the people there, who had also plainly and distinctly seen the light. It was settled, therefore, by some of the old fishermen that this was a "death token"; and, sure enough, the man who kept the ferry at that time was drowned, at high water, a few nights afterward, landing from the boat, when he fell into the water, and so perished.

"The same winter in Barmouth people, as well as the inhabitants of the opposite banks, were struck by the appearance of a number of small lights, which were seen, dancing in the air, at a place called Borthwyn, about half a mile from the town. A great number of people came out to see these lights; and after awhile they all but one disappeared, and this one proceeded slowly, toward the water's edge, to a little bay, where some boats were moored. The men in a sloop, which was anchored near the spot, saw the light advancing. They saw it also hover for a few seconds over one particular boat, and then totally disappear. Two or three days afterward the man to whom that particular

boat belonged was drowned in the river, while he was sailing about Barmouth harbor in that very boat. We have narrated these facts as they occurred."

The Reverend Mr. Davis gives another account:[2] "Of late," he writes, "my sexton's wife, an aged, understanding woman, saw from her bed a little bluish candle upon the table end; within two or three days after comes a fellow in, inquiring for her husband and, taking something from under his cloak, clapt it down directly upon the table end, where she had seen the candle; and what was it but a dead-born child.

"Another time, the same woman saw such another candle upon the other end of the same table; within a few days after, a weak child, by myself newly christened, was brought into the sexton's house, where presently he died; and when the sexton's wife, who was then abroad, came home, she found the woman shrouding the child on that other end of the table where she had seen the candle. On a time, myself and a kinsman coming from our school in England, and being three or four hours benighted ere we could reach home, saw a light, which, coming from a house which we well knew, held its course (but not directly) in the highway to church; shortly after, the eldest son in the house died, and steered the same course. Myself and my wife, one evening, saw such a light coming to the church from the midwife's house; and within a month she did follow."

I could quote many cases of the same kind, and in all of them it would be found that the deaths that followed the appearances of these candles were of members of a family with a strain of old Welsh blood in their veins. The corpse candles are quite as exclusive as the banshees and Gwrach-y-rhibyns.

Other phenomena that haunt Welsh families are the Derwyn Corph, or Corpse Bird, the Tolaeth, the Tanwedd and Nenaddlywd Toili. The Corpse Bird is a phantom bird that comes to the window of the person doomed to die and taps with its beak against the glass. The Tolaeth are audible phenomena that vary

[2] See *News from the Invisible World,* by T. Charley.

a great deal. Sometimes they are rappings and knockings on the doors or walls of the house in which the doomed person or members of his or her family are living; sometimes ghostly footsteps that tramp up and down staircases and along passages, invariably halting outside the door of the doomed person; and sometimes rumbling sounds, like the wheels of a heavy vehicle, that stops outside the house of one who is doomed to die shortly.

A family named Thomas, living in Penmaenmawr in the eighties of the last century, were awakened one night by the sound of wheels stopping outside their house. They then heard, to their great alarm, the front door, which they knew was locked and bolted on the inside, open, and footsteps run up the stairs and halt outside a spare room, in which no one was sleeping at the time. After a pause of some seconds the footsteps ran down the stairs, the front door opened and shut, and the wheels drove off. The following day an aged relative of theirs arrived unexpectedly. He was allotted the spare room, and died in it within a week.

Another instance of the Tolaeth haunting that, no less than the forgoing, is authentic, occurred at Barmouth. It was experienced by a family named Davis, who were residing at Barmouth temporarily. They, too, were awakened one night by the sound of a vehicle stopping outside their house. They then heard the front door open and something come creeping up the stairs, as if on all fours. It halted outside the door of the room in which the youngest child, a boy of seven, slept, and almost simultaneously the child was heard screaming violently. The whole household, thoroughly alarmed, rushed to his room, and though they could see nothing to account for it, they found him so convulsed with terror that it was some time before he could speak. When at last he could speak, they gathered from what he told them that something cold and slimy and smelling horribly had come into his room and jumped on to the bed. Though absolutely well prior to this incident, the child fell ill immediately after it, and died within a few days.

Green Ladies, White Ladies, and Other Ghosts

Green Ladies are, without doubt, more numerous in Scotland than elsewhere. There was the Green Lady of the Carnegies; another Green Lady once haunted the family of a former laird of Newton, while the Burnetts of Crathes also have a Green Lady attached to their family.

Crathes Castle, a stately old building, probably had some attraction for Queen Victoria, as she not infrequently went there when she was staying at Balmoral. There is something in the atmosphere of the place that suggests, to sensitive minds at least, ghosts; and the Green Lady is said to have appeared at Crathes on many occasions, though only before the death of a Burnett, or some other grave trouble in their family.

A very notorious phantom lady, described as sometimes wearing a white, and sometimes a green, dress, and known as the Siannag or Elle maid, used to haunt the Campbells when they lived at Dunstaffnage Castle on Loch Etive. It invariably exhibited signs of sorrow before the death of a Campbell and joy before any event which brought them happiness. To this extent it followed the tactics of banshees, but, unlike banshees, it seems to have harbored spite, as it sometimes used to tease people by pulling off their bedclothes and stamping up and down the floor, to wake them. Also, unlike a banshee, with which it has been compared, it seems to have confined itself to one place, Dunstaffnage, and not to have moved about with the family to which it was attached.

If any place should possess a ghost that place is, assuredly, Dunstaffnage Castle, which was built by Evanus[1] about the time of Julius Caesar. For many years it was the burial ground of the ancient kings of those parts, sufficient in itself to generate hauntings, and the receptacle of the famous Lia Fail or Stone of Destiny. Tradition says this stone was the pillow of the Patriarch Jacob at Luz. We next hear of it as a priceless treasure in the possession of Gathelus, son of Cecrops, King of Athens. Gathelus had wandered into Egypt and, entering the service of one of the pharaohs, eventually married his daughter. He formed a great friendship with Moses, and either from him or someone else received a timely warning of the plagues. Consequently, in order to escape them, he quitted Egypt; and going to Spain he founded there a small kingdom. As a parting gift from Moses, he had received the stone on which Jacob had slept and, taking it with him to Spain, he eventually gave it to his son Milesius, who took it to Ireland, where, in his turn, he founded a small kingdom and ruled over it many years. Presumably, it was this Milesius who founded the Milesian dynasty in Ireland. Anyhow, it is from him that the O'Neills, O'Briens, O'Donnells and various other of the oldest Irish clans claim descent. And it was thus that the stone found a resting place at Tara, where a long succession of Irish kings was crowned. It was credited with prophetic powers. As the king about to be crowned sat thereon, it gave forth sounds, which were supposed not only to denote the character of the royal person seated on it, but to indicate the nature of his coming reign. Presumably, the sounds were interpreted according to some code. The stone was removed from Tara and taken to Scotland, which was then termed Alba, by Fergus, son of Ferchard, of the royal house of Niall of the Nine Hostages, and placed in Dunstaffnage Castle, where it remained till 834, when it was carried by Kenneth II to Scone, in Perthshire. The English king, Edward I, took it away from

[1] *Picturesque Scotland,* by Francis Watt and Rev. Andrew Carter.

Scone and placed it in Westminster Abbey to evade the prophecy that a Scot should rule where it was.

On concluding an honorable peace with Edward II, Robert Bruce stipulated for the restoration of the stone; but the Londoners rose in a body and prevented its removal, which was a terrible blow to Bruce, who saw in his failure to obtain the Stone of Destiny the improbability of his ever obtaining the English throne. When James VI of Scotland became King of England, belief in the prophetic and superphysical nature of the stone was resuscitated and once again became general.

To revert to the Castle of Dunstaffnage. In 1305 it was besieged and taken by Robert Bruce, between whom and the then Lords of Lorne, who owned it, there was a deadly feud. It was here, at the castle, that Donald, lord of the isles, collected his forces together to fight against James II, and here, at a later date, that the Earl of Argyll landed, to make his plans for the campaign in favor of the hapless Duke of Monmouth.

The situation of the castle on a rocky promontory running into the sea, access to which is gained by a number of steps rudely hewn out of rock, made it useful as a fort, before the days of powerful cannon and high explosives, and it was garrisoned by the government during the risings of 1715 and 1745. Its somber appearance, especially at twilight and in the grey of dawn, has a definite touch of the weird and ghostly and, for this reason, one learns without surprise that it was once, at any rate, badly haunted.

Another ghost of the same type as the Siannag or Elle maid, the family ghost of the Campbells when they lived at Dunstaffnage Castle, haunted the MacLeans of Coll.[2] This phantom resented strangers coming to Breacacha Castle, the seat of the MacLeans, and used to play them all manner of annoying and alarming tricks. It would spring out on them from dark corners and confuse them to such a degree that they lost their way in the gloomy passages of the ancient building. In appearance,

[2] See *Superstitions of the Scottish Highlands,* by J. G. Campbell.

however, this ghost was unlike the Elle maid of Dunstaffnage, being old and haggish, and having long white hair and a much wrinkled face.

A beautiful phantom with long yellow hair and eyes of the deepest blue used to haunt the lords of the isles in their old Castle of Sleat.

The laird of Inverawe was haunted by a beautiful phantom that, like the MacLean ghost, disliked all strangers and invariably frightened and annoyed them when they visited Inverawe House. Tradition said she was the ghost of a mistress of a former laird of Inverawe, who had caused her to be buried alive.

The original owners of Glengarry were also long haunted by a phantom of the stranger-hating order. That was only heard, however, and felt: it was never seen.

One and all of this species of ghost were said to warn the families to which they were attached of an impending death, or some other calamity. Many strange tales of them are current throughout the west of Scotland. Oddly enough, some of these ghosts, who are as a rule extremely pretty, are credited with shocking cruelty to animals, especially dogs. The laird of Largie's family in Cantyre was haunted by the ghost of a pretty girl who, it was said, hated dogs to such an extent that she brought about the deaths of many. No dog was safe from her; and sometimes her victims were found stripped of their skin. The circumstances in which the animals had met their death, apparently, left no doubt as to the ghost's guilt.

There is a curious tradition in the neighborhood of Lianachan in Lochaber relating to a Kennedy. He was fishing one day in a stream in that district when he saw a girl, sitting on a rock, dangling her feet in the water. She had long yellow hair, which fell in curls over her shoulders, and deep blue eyes, and was altogether so pretty that Kennedy gazed at her, spellbound with admiration. He had never thought a woman could be so beautiful, save in dreams. Throwing down his rod, for fishing no longer interested him, he approached the girl and was about to

speak, when she walked away. He followed her, and she suddenly turned around and cursed him and his family, saying she hated men, and that henceforth no luck would ever come to any male member of his family, so long as they remained in Scotland. She then disappeared. What she said came true; he lost money, and his sons, who were handsome boys, fell ill, one after the other, and died. His daughters married, but misfortune always attended their male offspring; and always before the death of one of them the beautiful phantom was heard, and sometimes seen, clapping her hands gleefully and laughing.

Many families in Tiree were (and I am told some of them still are) haunted by phantoms in the guise of beautiful women, and not infrequently their origin has been traced to chance encounters of the above description. A Campbell, for instance, was walking near the waterfall of Bochaoil, in Glenorchy, one day, when he saw a beautiful girl peering at him from behind a tree. Seeing her smile archly, as their eyes met, he ran after her and finally caught her up, having driven her into a corner formed by overhanging rocks. Without a moment's hesitation he began making love to her, but he had not been doing so for long when she cut him short, saying that she hated him and all his stock and would haunt him and his descendants for many years. "Not one of you," she cried, "shall ever be born above Bochaoil." Having uttered these words she suddenly vanished, and Campbell, very frightened and chilled, made for home with the utmost speed.

Some months afterward he was out riding late one night, when his horse shied so abruptly and vigorously that he was almost unseated. He looked ahead of him for the cause and perceived a woman lying in the middle of the road, all huddled up as if she were either dead or injured. As the sun had long since set, and the moon had temporarily disappeared, he could not see the woman very clearly. However, he got the impression that she was old and infirm, and at once, dismounting from his horse, he ran to her assistance; but, directly he approached her,

she sprang up, and the moon, at that moment appearing, revealed to him no earthly being but the beautiful phantom that had cursed him. As he gazed at her, both amazed and entranced, with a mocking laugh she waved her hands at him and vanished. The following day his youngest brother was drowned off the coast. Always before a death of one of these Campbells this ghost was either seen or heard, and no child in the family was ever born alive above Bochaoil.

Extraordinary stories are told in Iona and Mull of thrashing ghosts that sometimes attach themselves to certain families, whom they haunt, as their name implies, malevolently. One such case is the following: An Iona man went fishing one day in a neighboring river. Hearing a woman weeping, he looked around him, and presently perceived a very pretty girl, sitting by a rock, wringing her hands, as if in the direst distress. He at once got up, and going to her asked what was the matter and if he could help her. She did not reply but went on weeping. He asked again, and this time she said, "Ask for news and you will be told news." Now this seems to be an ordinary form of greeting used by witches and phantoms of a certain type in the west of Scotland. At any rate the Iona man knew at once she was a phantom, for he said, "I put God between us"; whereupon, far from being disconcerted by this reply, the phantom told him to kneel down in front of her. He obeyed, as he found himself unable to do otherwise, and she then proceeded to beat him all over his body, so severely that he shrieked with pain. It was not until he was nearly dead with pain that she finally let him go, telling him to come to the same place again the following day, at midnight.

When that hour approached he tried desperately hard to stay in his bed at home, but so compelling was the influence of this beautiful phantom, and so great her fascination, that in the end he had to go to meet her and, as he anticipated, she beat him more unmercifully than ever. After several nights of this treatment, for no matter how much the phantom beat him he

could not resist her, he became very ill; but it was not until he was on the verge of collapsing that he managed to tear himself away from her, as he thought, and leave the country. First of all he went to England, and then to America. But it was of no avail; she followed him, and in the end she drove him to suicide. Not satisfied with that, this beautiful phantom subsequently haunted his family, all of whom likewise came to an untimely end.

A somewhat similar story is told of a man in Mull. To the sophisticated such tales as these sound far-fetched and foolish, but they are still believed by the more simple of the rustic people in the west of Scotland and, knowing these people, as I do, to be on the whole a sober, God-fearing and hard-headed community, it is incredible to my mind that they should believe in anything that has not at least a foundation in truth.

A somewhat exceptional Scottish phantom, in that it is a woman with no claim to beauty, is "May Moulach" or "The Maug," which haunts Tulloch Gorms and warns the Grants of an approaching death in their family.[3] The left hand of this ghost is covered with long hair, which is revolting to a degree.

Somewhat unusual, too, since it is a phantom in the form of a man, and equally unpleasant, is the Lham-dearg, or ghost with the bloody hand, which haunts the Kinchardines. In reference to this ghost Sir Walter Scott says, quoting from Macfarlane's manuscripts: "There is much talk of a spirit called 'Lyerg' who frequents the Glenmore. He appears, with a red hand, in the habit of a soldier, and challenges men to fight with him. As lately as the year 1669 he fought with three brothers, one after another, who immediately died therefrom."

Apparently a challenge to fight from the Lham-dearg was a sure death signal to the challenged. It might be inferred from Sir Walter Scott's quotation that the Lham-dearg challenged

[3] See *Notes on the Folk Lore of the Northern Counties of England and the Borders,* by William Henderson.

people promiscuously, whereas, usually at all events, it confined its very unpleasant attentions to the Kinchardines who, at one time at least, regarded it as their family ghost.

The Bodca-an-dun, or Ghost of the Hill, haunts the family of Rothiemurchas. This ghost does not adopt any definite shape, but simply appears as a mist or cloud rising out of the ground. At the same time it exudes an atmosphere of intense horror.

The McCleans of Lochbury were haunted by a phantom horseman supposed by them to be the spirit of some remote ancestor. Before a death in their family the phantom horseman was seen galloping furiously along the seashore bordering their home. Sir Walter Scott, referring to it in his *Demonology and Witchcraft*, says: "Among those spirits who have deigned to vouch their existence by appearance of late years is that of an ancestor of the family of MacLean of Lochbury. Before the death of any of his race, the phantom-chief gallops along the sea-shore, near to the Castle, announcing the event by cries and lamentations. The spectre is said to have rode his rounds and uttered his death cries within these few years, in consequence of which the family and clan, though much shocked, were in no way surprised to hear, by next accounts, that their gallant chief was dead at Lisbon, where he served under Lord Wellington."

Yet another Scottish family ghost of the unusual, that is to say grotesque, order, is the Bodach Garlin. It appears in shadowy form, suggestive of something very horrible, and glides noiselessly, as if with murderous intent, through the gloomy corridors of Gartnibeg[4] House, before the death of any member of the family of Gurlinbeg.

[4] Called by some writers "Garlin Bodacher."

Scandinavian, Polish, Russian, and Italian Ghosts

Although in most European countries there are ghosts attached to certain families, these ghosts would seem to be rather more numerous in the north of Europe than in the south. In Sweden the Bernadottes are periodically visited by the phantom of an old woman that appears before any great event likely to affect them in any way. Dr. de Boismont tells how the apparition appeared to Jean Baptiste Jules Bernadotte, King of Sweden,[1] at a time when he was contemplating sending an army to Norway under the command of his son Oscar, to subdue a rebellion that was causing him very grave anxiety. One day, after he had had an animated conversation with his ministers on the subject, he mounted his horse and went for a ride, in order to recover his equanimity. As he was nearing a lonely, gloomy thicket, his horse suddenly shied, and the next moment, from among the trees, there emerged an old woman with long, disheveled locks, and clad in a most fantastic fashion.[2] The king, though startled at her strange appearance, maintained his composure sufficiently to inquire who she was and what she wanted, whereupon she replied, "Mark my words, if Oscar goes to the war you meditate, he will not give but receive the first blow." She then vanished. Much impressed and not a little perturbed, the king at once returned home. The following day

[1] When he succeeded Charles XIII of Sweden he was known as Charles XIV.

[2] See *Hallucinations*, by Brierre de Boismont, M.D.

he went to a meeting of the national council, looking pale and tired as if, which was indeed the fact, he had not slept a wink all night. "I have changed my mind," he said. "We will negotiate for peace; but I must have honorable terms."

It was only to his most intimate friends that Bernadotte explained the real reason of this sudden alteration in his plans. Like Bonaparte, Bernadotte was a great believer in destiny, an idiosyncrasy that was commented upon in a biography of him published in 1844 in a journal at Pau,[3] the town in which he was born. The following extract from it will be found appropriate to this volume, since it touches on family ghosts:

"There are certain destinies," the writer says, "which have singular mysteries attached to them. The astonishing success of Bernadotte is said to have been foretold to him by the same celebrated fortuneteller who predicted that of Bonaparte, and who so fully possessed the confidence of the Empress Josephine. Like all men who feel themselves within a power which urges them on to fortune, or which impels them to extract the means of it out of favorable events, Bernadotte believed in this special and independent destiny, and in a kind of tutelar divinity who vouchsafed to him a special protection.

"An ancient chronicle of his family is said to have contained the prediction of a certain fairy, who had married one of his ancestors, that an illustrious king should spring from her race. In olden times every family in these parts possessed its guardian genius, who watched over its safety. Bernadotte never forgot the legend which had charmed his early days and, possibly, it was not without its influence over the glorious destiny of this great man."

Finland also has its family ghosts, and apropos of them Burton, in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, writes: "Near Rufus Nova, in Finland, there is a lake in which, when the governor of the castle dies, a spectrum is seen, in the habit of Arion, with

[3] Just after his death.

a harp, and makes excellent music, like those clocks in Cheshire, which they say presage death to the master of the family; or that oak in Lanthadran Park, in Cornwall, which foreshows as much."

Regarding northern royalties, there would seem to have always been a strange relationship between them and the unknown, for if they were not haunted themselves by some phantom that, apparently, took a keen interest in their destiny, they not infrequently returned as ghosts to haunt their descendants or those who occupied the throne after them. As instances of the latter, the ghost of Abel, the Danish king, who is believed to have murdered his brother, is said to appear in the Wood of Poole, near the city of Sleswig, prior to any event in connection with Danish royalty; while, with a similar purpose, the phantom of Valdemar IV appears, periodically, in Gurre Wood, near Helsingor.

As in England and other countries, however, the Scandinavian ghosts are by no means the monopoly of kings and the more wealthy classes; they haunt the families of the very poor. Only a few years ago an account was sent me of the haunting of a peasant family in Norway by a ghostly phenomenon of a very fantastic order. Often before the death of a member of the family, either the bedclothes in one of the rooms would appear as if someone was lying at full length under them, or one of the pillows would take the shape of a very sinister-looking face. The same phenomena were said to have been in the family for generations, and all attempts to account for them on natural grounds had failed.

Another instance of a ghost attached to a family in a humble position of life was in Copenhagen. They kept a shop in a quite poor part of the town, and when it was closed one evening and they were seated in their parlor, a neighbor paid them a visit. She was just telling them, with considerable satisfaction, a piece of local gossip, when she stopped short and with an ejac-

ulation of dismay pointed to one of the walls. All eyes looked toward the spot indicated, and saw on the wall the shadow of a gallows with a man's body hanging on it. The phenomenon remained there for about a minute, and then suddenly vanished.

"Whatever was it! What did it mean?" the neighbor asked, when she had in some measure recovered from her astonishment.

"It means some member of the family is going to die," the shopkeeper replied. "That shadow has haunted my family ever since one of my ancestors was wrongfully hanged for stealing, about a hundred and fifty years ago. I saw it the night before my father died, and he saw it the night before his father died. You may take it for granted one of us here present tonight will very shortly die."

All in the room turned pale and regarded one another with very scared faces; but the father was right, for the next day his youngest child, who had been present when the phenomenon occurred, was killed in a street accident.

In Scandinavian countries, Sweden in particular, phantom lights, sometimes resembling the corpse candles of Wales, are not an uncommon form of family haunting; and in Denmark the most common form of family ghost would seem to be pigs of the Kirkgrim[4] species. A ghost in the form of a grey sow used to haunt several families living in Krokjoberg, its appearance always being regarded by them as a sure prediction of death or calamity. Apart from these phantom lights and pigs, there would seem to be nothing very distinctive about family hauntings in Scandinavia.

Turning to Russia, the Romanoffs, according to Andrew Lang and other authorities,[5] numbered among the ghostly phe-

[4] See Thorpe's *Northern Mythology*, vol. II.

[5] *Book of Dreams and Ghosts*, by Andrew Lang, and *The Ghost World*, by Rev. T. F. Thiselton Dyer.

nomena that periodically haunted them, a wraith or double, akin to the wraith of Queen Elizabeth of England and the wraiths of the daughters of the Earl of Holland.

The notorious Empress Catherine is said to have seen it, prior to her death. One night after she had retired to bed, she was roused by one of her ladies-in-waiting who begged her to come at once to the state chamber. The lady-in-waiting was so agitated that Catherine got up at once and hastened to the state chamber, and there, sitting on the throne, she saw a figure, the exact image of herself. However frightened she might have felt, she did not give way to panic, but summoning some of the soldiers on duty in the palace, she ordered them to fire at the figure. They obeyed and the figure instantly vanished. The queen, who realized that what she had seen was the ghost that haunted the imperial family of Russia, died shortly afterward.

Family ghosts in Russia sometimes take the form of corpse candles, swarms of gnats, and shadows of various kinds on the doors and walls. Shadows are still, I believe, in spite of the Soviets' determination to root out all religion and superstition, often regarded with apprehension in certain parts of Russia; they certainly were so regarded once.[6]

Poland, as one might expect after a perusal of the folklore of the country, is rich in family ghosts. Every individual in the family of the Princess Natgotsky of Warsaw received a warning from the unknown before their death. Dr. Lee gives the following instance of this with regard to the princess herself, in one of his works:

"Prior to her departure one year for Paris, Princess Natgotsky had a vision. She saw herself in a strange room. A man entered, bearing in his hand a cup which he offered her. 'I'm not thirsty,' she said. He insisted, however, that she should drink, telling her it would be for the last time in her life. He then vanished. Shortly after this incident the princess came to Paris, put

[6] See Ralston's *Songs of the Russian People.*

up at a hotel, and was taken ill. The king's physician was sent for and on his arrival she instantly recognized him as the man in her vision. She drank what he offered her quite cheerfully, however, saying she knew it was all right this time as the room was not the one she had seen in her vision. She got well but, tiring of her quarters, took up her abode in a convent, and on being ushered into her apartment at once exclaimed, 'My doom has come! This is the room I saw; I shall never leave it alive.' She was almost immediately afterward taken ill; the same doctor attended her, and the last drink she ever had was given to her by him."

Recently I was told by a Polish lady staying in London of a family in Warsaw haunted by a face that was always seen reflected in a mirror prior to their experiencing any very great calamity or loss. A friend of my informant, Mrs. Bieber, a German lady, went to stay with them one summer, and the morning after her arrival she was standing in front of the dressing table mirror, arranging her hair, when she saw in the mirror a strange face looking over her shoulder. It was of a yellow-greenish hue; broader and larger altogether, perhaps, than a human face, and the mass of matted straw-colored hair that covered its head hung down on either side of it. It was quite clean-shaven, and might, for that reason, have belonged to a woman, but not to a woman of any present-day living race. The eyes were light and slightly oblique, and as they met Mrs. Bieber's eyes they became filled with an expression of diabolical glee. Mrs. Bieber felt such an awful thing could only emanate from a hell of inconceivable horror and wickedness. Too frightened and fascinated to move she stood staring in the mirror, till, to her intense relief, the thing suddenly vanished. On descending to breakfast, some minutes later, she told Madame K., her hostess, what she had seen, whereupon the latter exclaimed, "Oh, God, that was the terrible head that haunts my husband's family. Something awful is going to happen to one of us."

Oddly enough, nothing very serious did happen on this occa-

sion. About a year afterward, however, Madame K. was found one morning to be quite mad; and as the family doctor said she must have received some terrible shock—and about a week later her husband died—her children always thought that she had seen the terrible head, the forerunner of her husband's death, and that her madness was caused by the shock she had then received.

Cardan and Henningius Grosius, in their respective works, narrate various instances of Italian family ghosts. Henningius Grosius narrates the following: "Jacopo Donati, the head of one of the most important families in Venice, had a child, the heir to the family, very ill. At night, when in bed, Donati saw the door of his chamber opened and the head of a man thrust in. Knowing that it was not one of his servants, he roused the house, drew his sword, went over the whole palace, all the servants declaring that they had seen such a head thrust in at the doors of their several chambers at the same hour; the fastenings were all found secure, so that no one could have entered from without. The next day the child died."

The Borgias were a much-haunted family. Allen Upward narrates[7] the case of a wraith or double in connection with them. Roderigo Borgia, officially known as Pope Alexander VI, was much dreaded on account of various sinister rumors with regard to him. Cardinals died very frequently in Rome during his pontificate, and the hand of suspicion was covertly pointed at him, especially since it was said he always inherited their money. One day he invited himself and his son, the Duke of Romagna, to dinner at the house of Cardinal Corneto,[8] who was said to be immensely wealthy. All the same, the pope insisted upon being allowed on this occasion to provide the wine, and expressed the wish that two cardinals whom he warned should be invited to the dinner.

[7] *Secrets of the Past,* by Allen Upward.
[8] Adrian Castellense.

On the day of the party the pope, accompanied by his son and butler, arrived in good time, the pope giving his butler orders to keep a strict eye on the wine and to be sure to give it to the two cardinals, as it was the wine they particularly liked. Just before it was time for the dinner to be served, however, the butler asked one of his underlings to look after the wine that they had brought with them, and which was to be kept for the pope's own use, as he had to go back to the Vatican at once to fetch some peaches which had been sent to the pope as a present, and which he should have brought with him, but had forgotten to do so. At the same time the pope, finding that he had left something, namely a medallion that he always wore as an amulet because a certain astrologer had warned him never, as he valued his life, to be without it, sent one of the cardinals back to the Vatican to fetch it. On entering the apartment where, according to the pope's instructions, he would find the medallion, the cardinal received a shock. In the center of the room stood a ghostly looking bier, and on it, emitting a light of a leadenish blue color, a corpse that was the exact counterpart of the pope. Realizing that he was in the presence of the supernatural, the cardinal at once made the sign of the cross, whereupon the bier and corpse slowly faded away. He then, though horribly frightened, searched for the amulet, and having found it set off for the residence of Cardinal Corneto.

In the meanwhile, the pope and his son, the duke, impatient at having to wait so long for dinner, as they were thirsty, asked the underling who had charge of the wine to give them some, and the underling doing what he thought was right, gave them the wine which the butler had told him was to be kept for the pope's own use.

Dinner was announced as soon as the cardinal who had been sent to the Vatican for the medallion arrived with it; but the moment the pope put out his hand to take it, he fell screaming to the ground. His son ran to his assistance, and was about to raise him up when he, too, fell to the ground.

Obviously, both had been poisoned. The pope died, but his son recovered and was expelled, almost immediately, from the country.

From the butler's evidence it seemed perfectly clear that the pope had intended to poison the cardinals and had been poisoned himself instead, owing to the underling's misinterpretation of the butler's instructions. Many people thought, however, that the butler's story contained only half the truth, inasmuch as the underling's mistake was a put-up job on the part of the butler, the whole truth being that the cardinals, knowing that the pope had poisoned the wine, had bribed the butler so to contrive that instead of the wine being given to them it should be given, as if by accident, to the pope and his son.

With regard to the phantom bier and corpse seen by the cardinal, a similar death-predicting phenomenon is said to have haunted the Borgias throughout many generations.

PART V

Werewolves

A Werewolf in Innsbruck

Mme. Mildau was one of the prettiest women in Innsbruck. She had golden hair, large violet eyes, a smile that would melt a Loyola, and diamonds that set every woman's mouth watering. With such inducements to seduction, how could Mme. Mildau help delighting in balls and fetes, and in promenading constantly before the public? She reveled in a universal admiration—she aimed at a monopoly—and she lived wholly and solely to exact homage. To be deprived of any single opportunity of displaying her charms and consequent triumphs would indeed have been a hardship, and to nothing short of a very serious indisposition would Mme. Mildau have sacrificed her pleasure.

Now it so happened that three of the most brilliant entertainments of the season fell on the same night, and Mme. Mildau, with all the unreason of her sex, desired to attend each one of them.

"I have accepted these three invitations," she informed her husband, "and to these three balls I mean to go. I shall apportion the time equally between them. You forget," she added, "that the success of these entertainments really depends on me. Crowds go only to see me, and I should never forgive myself if I disappointed them."

But her husband, with the perversity characteristic of gout and middle age, combined, no doubt, with a not unnatural modicum of jealousy, maintained that one such fete should be sufficient amusement for one night. She might take her choice of one; he would on no account permit her to attend all three.

Much to his surprise and delight Mme. Mildau made no scene, but graciously submitted after a few mild protestations. A little later her husband remarked encouragingly, "I congratulate you, Julia, on your philosophy and self-restraint. In yielding to my wishes you have pleased me immeasurably, and I should like to show my gratification in some substantial manner. As it is some months since I gave you a present, I have resolved to make you one now. You may choose what you like."

"I have chosen," Mme. Mildau replied calmly.

"What, already!" her husband cried. "You sly creature. You have been keeping this up your sleeve. What is it?"

"A diamond tiara," was the cool reply. "The one you said you could not afford last Christmas."

"Mon Dieu!" her husband gasped. "I shall be ruined."

"You will be ruined if you do not give it to me," Mme. Mildau replied, "for in that case I should leave you. I couldn't live with a liar."

Her husband wrung his hands. He implored her to choose something else, but it was of no avail, and within two hours Mme. Mildau had visited the jeweler and the tiara was hers.

The eventful day came at last, and Mme. Mildau, escorted by her husband, attended one of the most popular balls of the season. She did not wear her tiara. There had been several highway jewelry robberies in the neighborhood of late, and she pleased her husband immensely by leaving her diamonds carefully locked up at home.

"You are prudence itself," he said, gazing at her in admiration. "And as a reward you shall dance all the evening while I look on and admire you."

But soon Mme. Mildau could dance no longer. She had a bad headache, and begged her huband to take her home. M. Mildau was sympathetic. He was very sorry for his wife, and suggested that she should take some brandy. She readily agreed that a little brandy might do her good, and they took some together in their bedroom, after which madame's husband remem-

bered little more. He had a vague notion that his wife was rolling his neck-handkerchief round his forehead in the form of a Turkish turban, and patting him on the cheeks and smilingly wishing him a thousand pleasant dreams, and then—all was a blank. He might as well have been dead. With madame it was otherwise. The headache was, of course, a ruse. The brandy she had given her husband had been well drugged, and no sooner had she made sure it had taken effect than she snapped her daintily manicured fingertips in the air and, retiring to her dressing room, changed the dress she was wearing for one ten times more costly and beautiful—a dress of rose-colored gauze, upon which a drapery of lace was suspended by agraffes of diamonds. A wreath of pale roses, which seemed to have been bathed in the dew of the morning, the better to harmonize with the delicate complexion of her lovely face, nestled in her hair, and above it, more magnificent than anything yet seen in Innsbruck, and setting off to perfection the dazzling luster of her yellow curls, the tiara of diamonds.

After a final survey of herself in the glass, she slipped on her cloak, and stole softly out to join her intimate friend, the Countess Linitz, who was also going to the ball. All things so far had worked wonderfully well; not even a servant suspected her. In order to avoid trusting her secret to anyone in the house, she had employed a stranger to hire an elegant carriage, which was in waiting for her at a discreet distance from the front door. The ball at which Mme. Mildau soon arrived with her friend was much more to her liking than the one to which she had been previously escorted by her husband. The music was more harmonious, the conversation more amiable, the dresses more elaborate and, what was more important than all, Mme. Mildau's success was even more instantaneous and complete. The whole room—host, guests, musicians, even waiters—one and all were literally dumbfounded at the extraordinary beauty of her face and costume, to say nothing of her jewels. Such an entrancing spectacle was without parallel in a ballroom in Inns-

bruck; and when she left, before the entertainment was over, all the life, the light, the gaiety went with her.

But it was at the third ball, to which the same equipage surreptitiously bore her, that Mme. Mildau's enjoyment and triumphs reached their zenith; and it was only toward the close of that entertainment—when she felt, by that revelation of instinct which never deceives women on similar occasions, that it was time to depart; that the brilliancy of her eyes, no less than the beauty of her dress, was fading; that her lips, parched with fatigue, had lost that humid red which rendered them so pretty and inviting, and that the dust had taken the beautiful gloss off her hair—that she experienced, for the first time, a sentiment of uneasiness in reviewing the rashness of her conduct. How was it possible, she asked herself, to prevent a casual acquaintance—her friends she could warn—letting out in conversation before her husband that she had been to these balls? And supposing he thus got to know of her deceit, what then?

This idea—the idea of being found out—with all its consequences, rose before her. Her exhausted imagination could find nothing to oppose it, nothing to relieve the feeling of depression which took possession of her, and she almost felt remorse when she threw herself into her carriage. It was a very dark night, cold and windy, and she was only too thankful to nestle close into the soft cushions at her back, and bury her face in the warm fur of her costly wrap. For some minutes she remained absorbed in thought; but it was not long before the monotonous rumble, rumble of the carriage produced a sensation of drowsiness, from which she was rudely awakened by the sound of a cough. Glancing in the direction from whence it came, to her utmost dismay and astonishment she saw, seated in the opposite corner of the vehicle, a young man of good, if somewhat peculiar appearance, and extremely well dressed. Mme. Mildau instantly took in all the disadvantages of her situation and, overwhelmed by the imprudence of her conduct,

exclaimed in a tone in which dignity and terror struggled for mastery, "Sir, what audacity!"

"Yes, indeed, what audacity!" the stranger replied, affecting to be shocked. "What pride! What a love of display!" and he rolled his big eyes at her and bared his teeth.

"But, sir," Mme. Mildau cried in horror, concluding that the unknown was a madman, "this is *my* carriage. I beg you will depart—I beseech you—I command you. I will summon my servants."

"That will be a vain waste of valuable breath," replied the young man coolly. "You may call your servants—but there is only one, and he is mine. He will not answer you."

"Where am I, then? How infamous!" exclaimed Mme. Mildau, and she burst into tears. "Oh, how cruelly punished I am!"

"It is true, madame, you will be punished for having been agreeable, gay, and brilliant tonight without the consent of your husband; but at present he knows nothing about it, for at this moment he reposes in the sleep of the just, confident that you are enjoying the same repose close to him. As to yourself, madame, why this fear? You will have nothing to dread, I assure you, from my indiscretion; but, as you may be aware, there is no fault, however small, that has not its expiation. Nay, do not weep. Am I so ugly? Why should you dread me so, madame? I am a great admirer of your charms, desirous to know you better. Nay, have no suspicions as to my morality—I am no profligate. I came to the ball tonight for quite another purpose."

"Sir, I understand you. You are employed by my husband. A spy! Detestable!"

"Stop, madame," the stranger said, laying his hand gently on hers. "Debase not the dignity of man by imagining for one instant that there is anyone who would lend himself so readily to act the odious part you impute to me. I am no spy."

"In heaven's name, then," Mme. Mildau exclaimed, "what brings you here? What do you want? Who are you?"

"One at a time, madame," the young man ejaculated. "To begin with, it was those diamonds of yours—those rings on your soft and delicate fingers, those bracelets on your slender rounded wrists, that necklace and pendant on your snowy breast, and over and above all that splendid tiara on your matchless hair. It was the sight of all those bright and gleaming stars that attracted me, just as the light of a candle attracts a moth. I could not resist them."

"Then you—you are a robber!" stammered the lady, ready to faint with terror.

"Wrong again!" the young man said; "I admire your jewels, it is true, but I am no thief."

"Then, in mercy's name, what are you?" demanded the lady.

"Well!" the stranger replied, speaking with a slight snarl, "I am a man now, but I shall soon change."

"A man and will soon change?" Mme. Mildau cried. "Oh, you're mad, mad—and I'm shut up in here with a lunatic! Help! help!"

"Calmly, calmly," the stranger exclaimed, lifting her hands to his lips and kissing them. "I'm perfectly sane, and at present perfectly harmless. Now tell me, madame—and mind, be candid with me—why don't you love your husband?"

"How do you know I don't?" Mme. Mildau faltered.

"Tut, tut!" the young man said. "Anyone could see that with half an eye. Besides, consider your conduct tonight! Answer my question."

"Well, you see," Mme. Mildau stammered, having come to the conclusion that even if the man were not mad it would be highly impolitic to provoke him, "I'm so much younger than he is. I'm only twenty-three, whereas he is forty-five. Besides, he detests all amusements, and I love them—especially dances. He is too fat to—"

"Are you sure he is fat? Will you swear he is fat?" the stranger asked, grasping her hands so tightly that she screamed.

"I swear it!" she said. "He is quite the fattest man I know."

"And tender! But no, he can't be very tender!"

"What questions to ask!" Mme. Mildau said. "How do I know whether he is tender! Besides, what does it concern you?"

"It concerns me much," the young man retorted, "and you, too, madame. You asked me just now a question concerning myself. Your curiosity shall be satisfied. I am a werewolf. My servant on the box who took the place of your employee is a werewolf. In an hour the metamorphosis will take place. You are out here in the Wood of Arlan alone with us."

"In the Wood of Arlan!"

"Yes, madame, in the Wood of Arlan, which is, as you know, one of the wildest and least frequented spots in this part of the Tyrol. We are both ravenously hungry, and—well, you can judge the rest!"

Mme. Mildau, who regarded werewolves in the same category as satyrs and mermaids, was once more convinced that she had to deal with a lunatic, but thinking it wisest to humor him, she said, "I shouldn't advise you to eat me. I'm not at all nice. I'm dreadfully tough."

"You're not that," the young man said, "but I'm not at all sure that the paint and powder on your cheeks might not prove injurious. Anyhow, I have decided to spare you on one condition!"

"Yes! and that is?" Mme. Mildau exclaimed, clapping her hands joyfully.

"That you let me have your husband instead. Give me the keys of your house, and my man and I will fetch him. Did you leave him sound asleep?"

"Yes!" Mme. Mildau faltered.

"In other words you drugged him! I knew it! I can read it in your eyes. Well—so much the better. Your foresight has proved quite providential. We will bind you securely and leave you here while we are gone, and when we return with your husband you shall be freed, and my man shall drive you home. The key?"

Mme. Mildau gave it to him. With the aid of his servant—a huge man, well over six feet and with the chest and limbs of a Hercules—the stranger then proceeded to gag and bind Mme. Mildau hand and foot and, lifting her gently onto the road, fastened her securely to the trunk of a tree.

"*Au revoir!*" he exclaimed, kissing her lightly on the forehead. "We shan't be long! These horses go like the wind."

The next moment he was gone. For some seconds Mme. Mildau struggled desperately to free herself; then, recognizing the futility of her efforts, resigned herself to her fate. At last she heard the clatter of horses' hoofs and the rumble of wheels, and in a few minutes she was once again free.

"Quick!" the stranger said, leading her by the arm, "there's not a moment to lose. The transmutation has already begun. In a few seconds we shall both be wolves and your fate will be sealed. We've got your husband and, fortunately for you, he is as you described him, nice and plump. If you want to take a final peep at him, do so at once; it's your last chance."

But Mme. Mildau had no such desire. She moved aside as her husband, clad in his pajamas and still sleeping soundly, was lifted out of the vehicle and placed on the ground, and then, hurriedly brushing past him, was about to enter the carriage, when the young man interposed.

"On the box, madame. We could not find you a coachman—you must drive yourself; and as you value your life, drive like the—"

But madame did not wait for further instructions. Springing lightly on the box, she picked up the reins, and with a crack of the whip the horses were off. A minute later, and the wild howl of wolves, followed by a piercing human scream, rang out in the still morning air.

"That's my husband! I recognize his voice." Mme. Mildau sighed. "Ah, well! thank God, the man wasn't a robber. My diamonds are safe."

The Case of Henri Sangfeu

In a village some three miles from Blois, on the outskirts of a forest, dwelt an innkeeper called Antonio Cellini, who, as the name suggests, was of Italian origin. Antonio had only one child, Beatrice, a very pretty girl, who at the time of this story was about nineteen years of age. As might be expected, Beatrice had many admirers; but none were so passionately attached to her as Herbert Poyer, a handsome youth, and one Henri Sangfeu, an extremely plain youth. Beatrice—and one can scarcely blame her for it—preferred Herbert, and with the wholehearted approval of her father consented to marry him. Sangfeu was, not unnaturally, upset; but, in all probability, he would have eventually resigned himself to the inevitable, had it not been for a village wag, who in an idle moment wrote a poem and entitled it: "Sansfeu the Ugly; or, Love Unrequited."

The poem, which was illustrated with several clever caricatures of the unfortunate Henri and contained much caustic wit, took like wildfire in the village; and Henri, in consequence, had a very bad time. Eventually it was shown to Beatrice, and it was then that the climax was reached. Although Henri was present at the moment, unable to restrain herself she went into peals of laughter at the drawings, saying over and over again: "How like him—how very like! His nose to a nicety! It is certainly correct to style him Sansfeu—for no one could call him Sansnez!"

Her mirth was infectious; everyone joined in; only Henri slunk away, crimson with rage and mortification. He hated Bea-

trice now as much as he had loved her before; and he thirsted only for revenge.

Some distance from the village and in the heart of the forest lived an old woman known as Mère Maxim, who was said to be a witch, and, therefore, shunned by everyone. All sorts of unsavory stories were told of her, and she was held responsible for several outbreaks of epidemics—hitherto unknown in the neighborhood—many accidents, and more than one death.

The spot where she lived was carefully avoided. Those who ventured far in the forest after nightfall either never came back at all or returned half imbecile with terror, and afterward poured out to their affrighted friends incoherent stories of the strange lights and terrible forms they had encountered, moving about amid the trees. Up to the present Henri had been just as scared by these tales as the rest of the villagers, but so intense was his longing for revenge that he at length resolved to visit Mère Maxim and solicit her assistance. Choosing a morning when the sun was shining brightly, he screwed up his courage, and after many bad scares finally succeeded in reaching her dwelling—or, I might say, her shanty, for by a more appropriate term than the latter such a queer-looking untidy habitation could not be described. To his astonishment Mère Maxim was by no means so unprepossessing as he had imagined. On the contrary, she was more than passably good-looking, with black hair, rosy cheeks, and exceedingly white teeth. What he did not altogether like were her eyes, which, though large and well shaped, had in them an occasional glitter, and her hands, which, though remarkably white and slender, had very long and curved nails, and to his mind suggested all sorts of unpleasant ideas. She was becomingly dressed in brown: brown woolly garments, with a brown fur cap, brown stockings, and brown shoes ornamented with very bright silver buckles. Altogether she was decidedly chic; and if a little incongruous in her surroundings, such incongruity only made her the more alluring; and as far as Henri was concerned rather added to her charms.

At all events, he needed no second invitation to seat himself by her side in the chimney corner, and his heart thumped as it had never thumped before when she encouraged him to put his arm round her waist and kiss her. It was the first time a woman had ever suffered him to kiss her without violent protestations and avowals of disgust.

"You are not very handsome, it is true," Mère Maxim remarked, "but you are fat—and I like fat young men," and she pinched his cheeks playfully and patted his hands. "Are you sure no one knows you have come to see me?" she asked.

"Certain!" Henri replied. "I haven't confided in a soul, I haven't even so much as dropped a hint that I intended seeing you."

"That is good!" Mère Maxim said. "Tell no one, otherwise I shall not be able to help you. Also, on no account let the girl Beatrice think you bear her animosity. Be civil and friendly to her whenever you meet; then give her, as a wedding present, this belt and box of bonbons." So saying, she handed him a beautiful belt composed of the skin of some wild animal and fastened with a gold buckle, and a box of delicious pink and white sugarplums. "Do not give her these things till the marriage eve," she added, "and directly you have given them come and see me—always observing the greatest secrecy." She then kissed him, and he went away brimming over with passion for her, and longing feverishly for the hour to arrive when he could be with her again.

All day and all night he thought of her—of her gay and sparkling beauty, of her kisses and caresses, and the delightful coolness of her thin and supple hands. His mad infatuation for her made him oblivious to the taunts and jeers of the villagers, who seldom saw him without making ribald allusion to the poem.

"There goes Sansfeu, alias Monsieur Grosnez!" they called out. "Why don't you cut off your nose for a present to mademoiselle? She would then have no need to buy a kitchen poker. Ha! ha! ha!" But their coarse wit fell flat. Henri hardly heard

it. All his thoughts, his burning love, his unquenchable passion, were centered in Mère Maxim: in spirit he was with her, alone with her, in the innermost recesses of the grim, silent forest.

The marriage eve came; he handed Beatrice the presents, and ere she had time to thank him—for the magnificence of the belt rendered her momentarily speechless—he had flown from the house, and was hurrying as fast as his legs could carry him to his tryst. The shadows of night were already on the forest when he entered it; and the silence and solitude of the place, the indistinct images of the trees, and their dismal sighing, which seemed to foretell a storm, all combined to disturb his fancy and raise strange specters in his imagination. The shrill hooting of an owl, as it rustled overhead, caused him an unprecedented shock, and the great rush of blood to his head made him stagger and clutch hold of the nearest object for support. He had barely recovered from this alarm when his eyes almost started out of their sockets with fright as he caught sight of a queer shape gliding silently from tree to tree; and shortly afterward he was again terrified—this time by a pale face, whether of a human being or animal he could not say, peering down at him from the gnarled and fantastic branches of a gigantic oak. He was now so frightened that he ran, and queer—indefinably queer—footsteps ran after him, and followed him persistently until he reached the shanty, when he heard them turn and leap lightly away.

On this occasion, the occurrence of Henri's second visit, Mère Maxim was more captivating than ever. She was dressed with wonderful effect all in white. She wore sparkling jewels at her throat and waist, buckles of burnished gold on her shoes; her teeth flashed like polished ivory, and her nails like agates. Henri was enraptured. He fell on his knees before her; he caught her hands and covered them with kisses.

"How nice you look today, my sweetheart," she said, "and

how fat! It does my heart good to see you. Come in, and sit close to me, and tell me how you have fared."

She led him in and, after locking and barring the door, conducted him to the chimney corner. And there he lay in her arms. She fondled him; she pressed her lips on his, and gleefully felt his cheeks and arms. And after a time when, intoxicated with the joy of it all, he lay still and quiet, wishing only to remain like that for eternity, she stooped down and, fetching a knot of cord from under the seat, began laughingly to bind his hands and feet. And at each turn and twist of the rope she laughed the louder. And when she had finished binding his arms and legs she made him lie on his back, and lashed him so tightly to the seat that, had he possessed the strength of six men, he could not have freed himself.

Then she sat beside him, and moving aside the clothes that covered his chest and throat, said, "By this time Beatrice—pretty Beatrice, vain and sensual Beatrice, the Beatrice you once loved and admired so much—will have worn the belt, will have eaten the sweets. She is now a werewolf. Every night at twelve o'clock she will creep out of bed and glide about the house and village in search of human prey, some bonny babe, or weak, defenseless woman, but always someone fat, tender, and juicy —someone like you."

And bending low over him, she bared her teeth, and dug her cruel nails deep into his flesh. A flame from the wood fire suddenly shot up. It flickered oddly on the figure of Mère Maxim —so oddly that Henri received a shock. He realized with an awful thrill that the face into which he peered was no longer that of a human being; it was—but he could no longer think—he could only gaze.

The Case of Roland Bertin

André Bonivon was eminently a man of war. He commanded a schooner called the *Bonaventure,* which was engaged in harassing the Huguenot settlements along the shores of the Gulf of Lions, during the reign of Louis XIV. On one of his marauding expeditions Bonivon sailed up an estuary of the Rhône rather farther than he had intended, and having no pilot on board, ran ashore in the darkness. A thunderstorm came on; a general panic ensued; and Bonivon soon found himself struggling in a whirlpool. Powerful swimmer though he was, he would most certainly have been drowned had not someone come to his assistance and, freeing him from the heavy clothes which weighed him down, dragged him on dry land. The moment Bonivon got on terra firma, sailorlike, he extended his hand to grip that of his rescuer, when, to his dismay and terror, instead of a hand he grasped a huge hairy paw.

Convinced that he was in the presence of the devil, who doubtless highly approved of the thousand-and-one atrocities he had perpetrated on the helpless Huguenots, he threw himself on his knees and implored the forgiveness of heaven.

His rescuer waited awhile in grim silence and then, lifting him gently to his feet, led him some considerable distance inland till they arrived at a house on the outskirts of a small town.

Here Bonivon's conductor halted and, opening the door, signed to the captain to enter. All within was dark and silent, and the air was tainted with a sickly, pungent odor that filled Bonivon with the gravest apprehensions. Dragging him along, Bonivon's guide took him into a room, and leaving him there

for some seconds, reappeared carrying a lantern. Bonivon now saw for the first time the face of his conductor—it was that of a werewolf. With a shriek of terror Bonivon turned to run but, catching his foot on a mat, fell sprawling on the floor.

Here he remained sobbing and shaking with fear till he was once more taken by the werewolf and set gently on his feet.

To Bonivon's surprise a tray full of eatables was standing on the table, and the werewolf, motioning to him to sit down, signed to him to eat.

Being ravenously hungry, Bonivon fell to, and, despite his fears—for being by nature alive to, and, by reason of his calling, forced to guard against the treachery of his fellow creatures, he more than half suspected some subtle design underlying this act of kindness—demolished every particle of food. The meal thus concluded, Bonivon's benefactor retired, locking the door after him.

No sooner had the sound of his steps in the stone hall ceased than Bonivon ran to the window, hoping thereby to make his escape. But the iron bars were too firmly fixed. No matter how hard he pulled, tugged, and wrenched, they remained as immovable as ever. Then his heart began to palpitate, his hair to bristle up, and his knees to totter; his thoughts were full of speculations as to how he would be killed and what it would feel like to be eaten alive. His conscience, too, rising up in judgment against him, added its own paroxysms of dismay, paroxysms which were still further augmented by the finding of the dead body of a woman, nude and horribly mutilated, lying doubled up and partly concealed by a curtain. Such a discovery could not fail to fill his heart with unspeakable horror; for he concluded that he himself, unless saved by a miracle—a favor he could hardly hope for, considering his past conduct—would undergo the same fate before morning. At a loss to know what else to do, he sat upon the corner of the table, resting his chin on the palms of his hands, and engaged in anticipations of the most frightful nature.

Shortly after dawn he heard the sound of footsteps approaching the room. The door slowly began to open; a little wider and a little wider, and then, when Bonivon's heart was on the point of bursting, it suddenly swung open wide, and the cold, grey dawn falling on the threshold revealed not a werewolf, but a human being: a man in the unmistakable garb of a Huguenot minister!

The reaction was so great that Bonivon rolled off the table and went into paroxysms of ungovernable laughter.

At length, when he had sobered down, the Huguenot, laying a hand on his shoulder, said: "Do you know now where you are? Do you recognize this room? No! Well, I will explain. You are in the house of Roland Bertin, and the body lying over yonder is that of my wife, whom your crew barbarously murdered yesterday when they sacked this village. They took me with them, and it was your intention to have me tortured and then drowned as soon as you got to sea. Do you know me now?"

Bonivon nodded—he could not have spoken to save his life.

"*Bien!*" the minister went on. "I am a werewolf—I was bewitched some years ago by the woman Grénier, Mère Grénier, who lives in the forest at the back of our village. As soon as it was dark I metamorphosed; then the ship ran ashore, and everyone leaped overboard. I saw you drowning. I saved you."

The captain again made a fruitless effort to speak, and the Huguenot continued, "Why did I save you? You, who had been instrumental in murdering my wife and ruining my home! Why? I do not know! Had I preferred for you a less pleasant death than drowning, I could have taken you ashore and killed you. Yet—I did not, because it is not in my nature to destroy anything. I have never in my life killed an animal, nor, to my knowledge, an insect; I love all life—animal life and vegetable life—everything that breathes and grows. Yet I am a Huguenot!—one of the race you hate and despise and are paid to exterminate. Assassin, I have spared you. Be not ungenerous. Spare others."

The captain was moved. Still speechless, he seized the minister's hands and wrung them. And from that hour to the day of his death—which was not for many years afterward—the Huguenots had no truer friend than André Bonivon.

The Case of Herr Hellen and the Werewolves of the Harz Mountains

Two GENTLEMEN, named respectively Hellen and Schiller, were on a walking tour in the Harz Mountains, in the early summer of the year 1840, when Schiller, slipping down, sprained his ankle and was unable to go on. They were some miles from any village, in the center of an extensive forest, and it was beginning to get dark.

"Leave me here," cried the injured man to his friend, "while you see if you can discover any habitation. I have been told these woods are full of charcoal-burners' and wood-cutters' huts, so that if you walk straight ahead for a mile or two, you are very likely to come across one. Do go, there's a good fellow, and if you are too tired to return yourself, send someone to carry me."

Hellen did not like leaving his comrade in such a dreary spot, alone and helpless, but as Schiller was persistent he at length yielded and, stepping briskly out, advanced along the track that had brought them hither. Once or twice he halted, fancying he heard voices, and several times his heart pulsated wildly at what he took to be the cry of a wolf—for neither Schiller nor he had weapons excepting sheath knives. At last he came to an open spot hedged in on all sides by gloomy pines, the shadows from which were beginning to fall thick and fast athwart the vivid greensward. It was one of those places—they are to be found in pretty nearly every country—studiously avoided by local woodsmen as the haunt of all manner of evil influences. Hellen

recognized it as such the moment he saw it, but as it lay right across his path, and time was pressing, he had no alternative but to keep boldly on. He was halfway across the spot when he was startled by a groan and, looking in the direction of the sound, he saw a man seated on the ground endeavoring to bandage his hand. Wondering why he had not observed him before, but thankful to meet someone at last, Hellen went up to him and asked what was the matter.

"I've broken my wrist," the man replied. "I was gathering sticks for my fire tomorrow when I heard the howl of a wolf, and in my anxiety to escape a conflict with the brute I climbed this tree. As I descended, one of the branches gave way, and I fell down with all my weight on my right arm. Will you see if you can bind it for me? I'm a bit awkward with my left hand."

"I will do my best," Hellen said and, kneeling beside the man, he took off the bandages and wrapped them round again. "There," he exclaimed, "I think that is better—at least it is the best I can do."

The stranger was now most profuse in his thanks, and when Hellen informed him of Schiller's condition, at once cried out, "You must both come to my cottage; it is only a short distance from here. Let us hasten thither now, and my daughter, who is very strong, shall go back with you and help you carry your friend. We are not rich, but we can make you both fairly comfortable, and all we have shall be at your disposal. But I wonder if you know what you have incurred by coming to this spot at this hour?"

"Why, no," Hellen said, laughing. "What?"

"The gratification of two wishes—the first two wishes you make! Of course, you will say it is all humbug, but, believe me, very queer things do happen in this forest. I have experienced them myself."

"Well!" Hellen replied, laughing more heartily than before, "if I wish anything at all it is that my wife were here to see how beautifully I have bandaged your wrist."

"Where is your wife?" the stranger inquired.

"At Frankfort, most likely taking a final peep at the children in bed before retiring to rest herself!" Hellen said, still laughing.

"Then you have children!" the stranger ejaculated, evidently interested.

"Yes, three—all girls—and such bonny girls, too. Marcella, Christina, and Fredericka. I wish I had them here for you to see."

"I should much like to see them, certainly," the stranger said. "And now you have told me so much of interest about yourself, let me tell you something of my own history in exchange. My name is Wilfred Gaverstein. I am an artist by profession, and have come to live here during the summer months in order to paint nature—nature as it really is—in all its varying moods. Nature is my only god—I adore it. I don't believe in souls. I love the trees and flowers and shrubs, the rivulets, the fountains, the birds and insects."

"Everything but the wolves!" Hellen remarked jocularly. Hardly, however, had he spoken these words before he had reason to alter his tone. "Great heavens! do you hear that?" he cried. "There is no mistake about it this time. It is a wolf, or may I never live to hear one again."

"You are right, friend," Wilfred said. "It is a wolf, and not very far away, either. Come, we must be quick," and thrusting his arm through that of Hellen's, he hurried him along. After some minutes' fast walking they came in sight of a neatly thatched whitewashed cottage, at the entrance to which two women and several children were collected. "That's my home," Wilfred said.

"And that's my wife!" Hellen cried, rubbing his eyes to make sure he was not dreaming. "God in heaven, what's the meaning of it all? My wife and children—all three of them! Am I mad?"

"It is merely the answer to your wishes," Wilfred rejoined calmly. "See, they recognize you and are waving."

As one in a sleep Hellen now staggered forward, and was soon in the midst of his family, who, rushing up to him, implored him to explain what had happened, and how on earth they came to be there.

"I am just as much at sea as you are," Hellen said, feeling them each in turn to make sure it was really they. "It's an insoluble mystery to me."

"And to us, too," they all cried. "A few minutes ago we were in our beds in Frankfort, and then suddenly we found ourselves here—here in this dreadful-looking forest. Oh, take us away, take us home, do!"

Hellen was in despair. It was all like a hideous nightmare to him. What was he to do?

"You must be my guests for tonight, at all events," Wilfred said, "and in the morning we will discuss what is to be done. Fortunately we have enough room to accommodate you all. There is food in abundance. Let me introduce you to my daughter, Marguerite," and the next moment Hellen found himself shaking hands with a girl of about twenty years of age. She was clad in what appeared to be a traveling dress, deeply bordered with white fur, and wore a most becoming cap of white ermine. Her feet were shod in long, pointed, and very elegant buckskin shoes, adorned with bright silver buckles. Her hair, which was yellow and glossy, was parted down the middle, and waved in a most becoming fashion low over the forehead and ears; and her features—at least so Hellen thought—were very beautiful. Her mouth, though a trifle large, had very daintily cut lips, and was furnished with unusually white and even teeth. But there was a peculiar, furtive expression in her eyes, which were of a very pretty shape and color, that aroused Hellen's curiosity, and made him scrutinize her carefully. Her hands were noticeably long and slender, with tapering fingers and long, almond-shaped, rosy nails, that glittered each time they caught the rays of the fast fading sunlight. Hellen's first impression of her was that she was marvelously beautiful, but

that there was a something about her that he did not understand—a something he had never seen in anyone before, a something that in an ugly woman might have put him on his guard, but in this face of such surpassing beauty a something he seemed only too ready to ignore. Hellen was a good, and up to the present, certainly, a faithful husband, but he was only a man after all, and the more he looked at the girl the more he admired her.

At a word from Wilfred, Marguerite smilingly led the way indoors, and showed the guests two bedrooms, small but exquisitely clean. There was a double bed in one, and two single ones in the other. The bed linen was of the very finest material, and white as snow.

"I think," Wilfred remarked, "two of the girls can squeeze in one bed—they are neither of them very big—though it does my heart good to see them so bonny."

"And mine, too," Marguerite joined in, patting the three children on the cheeks in turn, and drawing them to her and caressing them.

Mrs. Hellen, still dazed, and apparently hardly realizing what was happening, stammered out her thanks, and the party then descended to the kitchen to partake of a substantial supper that was speedily prepared for them.

"Had you not better go and look for your friend now?" Wilfred observed, just as Hellen was about to seat himself beside his wife and children. "Marguerite will go with you, and on your return the three of you can have your meal in here after the children have gone to bed."

Hellen readily assented and, kissing his wife and little ones, who tearfully implored him not to be gone long, set out, accompanied by Marguerite.

At each step they took, Marguerite's beauty became more irresistible. The soft rays of the moon falling directly on her features enhanced their loveliness, and Hellen could not keep

his eyes off her. The ominous cry of a night bird startled her; she edged timidly up to him; and he had to exert all his self-control, so eager was he to clasp her to him. In a strained, unnatural manner he kept up a flow of small talk, eliciting the information that she was an art student, and that she had studied in Paris and Antwerp, had exhibited in Munich and Turin, and was contemplating visiting London the following spring. They talked on in this strain until Hellen, remembering their mission, exclaimed, "We must be very close to where I left Schiller. I will call to him."

He did so—not once, but many times; and the reverberation of his voice rang out loud and clear in the silence of the vast, moon-kissed forest. But there was no response, nothing but the rustling of branches and the shivering of leaves.

"What's that?" Marguerite suddenly cried, clutching hold of Hellen's arm. "There! right in front of us, lying on the ground. There!" and she indicated the object with her gleaming fingertip.

"It looks remarkably like Schiller," Hellen said. "Can he be asleep?"

Quickening their pace, they speedily arrived at the spot. It was Schiller, or rather what had once been Schiller, for there was now very little left of him but the face and hands and feet; the rest had only too obviously been eaten. The spectacle was so shocking that for some minutes Hellen was too overcome to speak.

"It must have been wolves!" he said at length. "I fancied I heard them several times. Would to God I had never left him! What a death!"

"Horrible!" Marguerite whispered, and she turned her head away to avoid so harrowing a sight.

"Well," Hellen observed in a voice broken with emotion, "it's no use staying here. We can't be of any service to him now. I will gather the remains together in the morning, and with the

assistance of your father see that they are decently interred. Come! let us be going." He offered Marguerite his arm and they began to retrace their steps.

For some time Hellen was too occupied with thoughts of his friend's cruel death to think of anything else, but the close proximity of Marguerite gradually made itself felt, and by the time they had reached the open clearing—the spot where he had encountered Wilfred—his passion completely overpowered him. Throwing discretion to the winds, and oblivious of wife, children, home, honor, everything save Marguerite—the luster of her eyes and the dainty curving of her lips—he slipped his arm around her waist and, pressing her close to him, smothered her in kisses.

"How dare you, sir!" she panted, slowly shaking herself free. "Aren't you ashamed of such behavior? What would your wife say, if she knew?"

"I couldn't help it," Hellen pleaded. "I'm not myself tonight. Your beauty has bewitched me, and I would risk anything to have you in my arms." He spoke so earnestly and looked at her so appealingly that she smiled.

"I know I am beautiful," she said, and the intonation of her voice thrilled him to the very marrow of his bones. "Dozens of men have told me so. Consequently, since there seems to have been some excuse for you, I forgive you, only—" but before she could say another word, Hellen had again seized her, and this time he did not loosen his hold till from sheer exhaustion he could kiss her no more.

"It's no use!" he panted. "I can't help it. I love you as I never loved a woman before, and if you were to ask me to do so I would go to hell with you this very minute."

"It is dangerous to express such sentiments here," Marguerite said. "Don't you know this spot is full of supernatural influences, and that the first two things you wish for will be granted?"

"I have already wished," Hellen said. "I wished when I was here with your father."

"Then wish again," Marguerite replied; "I assure you your wishes will be fulfilled." And again she looked at him in a way that sent all the blood in his body surging wildly to his head, and roused his passion in hot and furious rebellion against his reason.

"I wish, then," he cried, seizing hold of her hands and pressing them to his lips—"I wish every obstacle removed that prevents my having you always with me—that is wish number one."

"And wish number two?" the girl interrogated, her warm, scented breath fanning his cheeks and nostrils. "Won't you wish that you may be mine forever? Always mine, mine to eternity!"

"I will!" Hellen cried. "May I be yours always—yours to do what you like with—in this life and the next."

"And now you shall have your reward," Marguerite exclaimed, clapping her hands gleefully. "I will kiss you of my own free will," and throwing her arms round his neck, she drew his head down to hers, and kissed him, kissed him not once but many times.

An hour later they left the spot and slowly made their way to the cottage. As they neared it, loud screams for help rent the air, and Hellen, to his horror, heard his wife and children —he could recognize their individual voices—shrieking to him to save them.

In an instant he was himself again. All his old affection for home and family was restored, and with a loud answering shout he started to rush to their assistance. But Marguerite willed otherwise. With a dexterous movement of her feet she got in his way and tripped him, and before he had time to realize what

was happening, she had flung herself on top of him and pinioned him down.

"No!" she said playfully, "you shall not go! You are mine, mine always, remember, and if I choose to keep you here with me, here you must remain."

He strove to push her off, but he strove in vain; for the slender, rounded limbs he had admired so much possessed sinews of steel, and he was speedily reduced to a state of utter impotence.

The shrieks from the cottage were gradually lapsing into groans and gurgles, all horribly suggestive of what was taking place, but it was not until every sound had ceased that Marguerite permitted Hellen to rise.

"You may go now," she said with a mischievous smile, kissing him gaily on the forehead and giving his cheeks a gentle slap. "Go—and see what a lucky man you are, and how speedily your first wish has been gratified."

Sick with apprehension, Hellen flew to the cottage. His worst forebodings were realized. Stretched on the floor of their respective rooms, with big, gaping wounds in their chests and throats, lay his wife and children; while cross-legged, on a chest in the kitchen, his dark saturnine face suffused with glee, squatted Wilfred.

"Fiend!" shouted Hellen. "I understand it all now. I have been dealing with the spirits of the Harz Mountains. But be you the devil himself you shan't escape me," and snatching an ax from the wall, he aimed a terrific blow at Wilfred's head.

The weapon passed right through the form of Wilfred, and Hellen, losing his balance, fell heavily to the ground. At this moment Marguerite entered.

"Fool!" she cried. "Fool, to think any weapon can harm either Wilfred or me. We are phantasms—phantasms beyond the power of either heaven or hell. Come here!"

Impelled by a force he could not resist, Hellen obeyed—and as he gazed into her eyes all his blind infatuation for her came back.

"We must part now," she said, "but only for a while—for remember, you belong to me. Here is a token"—and she thrust into his hand a wisp of her long, golden hair. "Sleep on it and dream of me. Do not look so sad. I shall come for you without fail, and by this sign you shall know when I am coming. When this mark begins to heal," she said, as, with the nail on the forefinger of the right hand, she scratched his forehead, "get ready!"

There was then a loud crash—the room and everything in it swam before Hellen's eyes, the floor rose and fell, and sinking backward he remembered no more.

When he recovered he was lying in the center of the haunted plot. There was nothing to be seen around him except the trees —dark lofty pines that, swaying to and fro in the chill night breeze, shook their somber heads at him. A great sigh of relief broke from him. His experiences, of course, had been only a dream. He was trying to collect his thoughts, when he discovered that he was holding something tightly clasped in one of his hands. Unable to think what it could be, he rose, and held it in the full light of the moon. He then saw that it was a tuft of white fur—the fur of some animal. Much puzzled, he put it in his pocket and, suddenly recollecting his friend, set out for the place where he had left him. "I shall soon know," he said to himself, "whether I have been asleep all this time. God grant it may be so!" His heart beat fearfully as he pressed forward, and he shouted out "Schiller" several times. But there was no reply, and presently he came upon the remains, just as he had seen them when accompanied by Marguerite. Convinced now that all that had taken place was grim reality, he went back along the route Schiller and he had taken the preceding day, and in due time reached the village. To the landlord of the inn where they had stayed he related what had happened. "I am truly sorry for you," the landlord said; "your experience has indeed been a terrible one. Everyone here knows the forest is

haunted in that particular spot, and we all give it as wide a berth as possible. But you have been most unfortunate, for Wilfred and Marguerite, who are werewolves, only visit these parts periodically. I last heard of them being seen when I was about ten years of age, and they then ate a peddler called Schwann, and his wife."

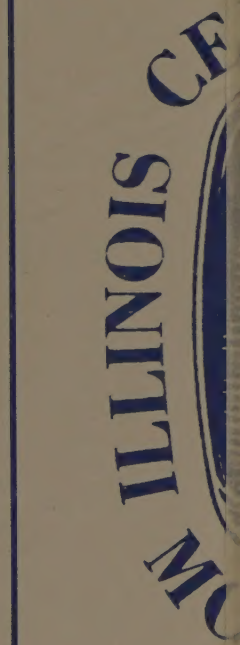
As soon as Schiller's remains had been brought to the village and interred in the cemetery, Hellen, armed to the teeth and accompanied by several of the biggest and strongest hounds he could hire—for he could get none of the villagers to go with him—spent a whole day searching for Wilfred's cottage. But although he was convinced he had found the exact spot where it had stood, there were now no traces of it to be seen.

At length he returned to the village, and on the following morning set out for Frankfort. On his arrival home he was immediately apprised of the fact that a terrible tragedy had occurred in his house. His wife and children had been found dead in their beds, with their throats cut and dreadful wounds in their chests, and the police had not been able to find the slightest clue to the murderers. With a terrible sinking at the heart Hellen asked for particulars, and learned, as he knew only too well he would learn, that the date of the tragedy was identical with that of his adventure in the forest.

He tried hard to persuade himself that the coincidence was a mere coincidence; but—he knew better. Besides, there was the scratch!—the scratch on his forehead.

Moreover, the scratch remained. It remained fresh and raw till a few days prior to his death, when it began to heal. And on the day he died it had completely healed.

LEARI



East

ELLIOTT O'DONNELL'S CASEBOOK OF GHOSTS

True stories from the Files of One of the World's Greatest Ghost-Hunters

Edited by Harry Ludlam

With an Introduction by August Derleth

Elliott O'Donnell was one of the world's great ghost-hunters. Before his recent death he had spent sixty years tracking down ghosts in both America and Britain.

In this book, Harry Ludlam, author of the perennially-popular true-ghost classics, THE MUMMY OF BIRCHEN BOWER and THE RESTLESS GHOSTS OF LADYE PLACE, has collected O'Donnell's very best stories of ghosts he himself has seen, those he has investigated personally, and those reported to him by reliable eyewitnesses.

The hauntings cover a very wide range of extraordinary supernatural experiences; puzzling, frightening, horrific and tragic. They include hauntings which O'Donnell investigated thoroughly in the early years of this century and which were subsequently retold and embroidered by others; O'Donnell puts the record straight.

"This CASEBOOK," writes August Derleth in the book's Foreword, "is the story of O'Donnell's long life with ghosts, a life that must be unique in the domain of the paranormal. Of his books, it is undoubtedly the most fascinating, precisely because it is more obviously autobiographical than any of its predecessors. It may well stand as O'Donnell's best work, and it may survive as an account unique in the annals of the supernatural." $5.95

TAPLINGER PUBLISHING CO.
New York